

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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THE UNCALLED.

CHAPTER I.

IT was about six o'clock of a winter's morning. In the eastern sky faint streaks of gray had come and were succeeded by flashes of red, crimson-cloaked heralds of the coming day. It had snowed the day before, but a warm wind had sprung up during the night, and the snow had partially melted, leaving the earth showing through in ugly patches of yellow clay and sooty mud. Half despoiled of their white mantle, though with enough of it left to stand out in bold contrast to the bare places, the houses loomed up, black, dripping, and hideous. Every once in a while the wind caught the water as it trickled from the eaves, and sent it flying abroad in a cold unsparkling spray. The morning came in, cold, damp, and dismal.

At the end of a short, dirty street in the meanest part of the small Ohio town of Dexter stood a house more sagging and dilapidated in appearance than its disreputable fellows. From the foundation the walls converged to the roof, which seemed to hold its place less by virtue of nails and rafters than by faith. The whole aspect of the dwelling, if dwelling it could be called, was as if, conscious of its own meanness, it was shrinking away from its neighbors and into itself. A sickly light gleamed from one of the windows. As the dawn came into the sky, a woman came to the door and looked out. She was a slim woman, and her straggling, dusty-colored hair hung about an unpleasant sallow face. She shaded her eyes with her hand, as if the faint light could hurt those cold, steel-gray orbs. "It's mornin'," she said to those within. "I'll have to be goin' along to git my man's breakfast: he goes to work at six o'clock, and I 'ain't got a thing cooked in the house fur him. Some o' the rest o' you'll have to stay an' lay her out." She went back in and closed the door behind her.

"La, Mis' Warren, you ain't a-goin' a'ready? Why, there's every-

thing to be done here yit : Margar't's to be laid out, an' this house has to be put into some kind of order before the undertaker comes."

"I should like to know what else I'm a-goin' to do, Mis' Austin. Charity begins at home. My man's got to go to work, an' he's got to have his breakfast: there's cares fur the livin' as well as fur the dead, I say, an' I don't believe in tryin' to be so good to them that's gone that you furgit them that's with you."

Mrs. Austin pinched up her shrivelled face a bit more as she replied, "Well, somebody ought to stay. I know I can't, fur I've got a ter'ble big washin' waitin' fur me at home, an' it's been two nights sence I've had any sleep to speak of, watchin' here. I'm purty near broke down."

"That's jest what I've been a-sayin'," repeated Mrs. Warren. "There's cares fur the livin' as well as fur the dead; you'd ought to take care o' yoreself: first thing you know you'll be flat o' yore own back."

A few other women joined their voices in the general protest against staying. It was for all the world as if they had been anxious to see the poor woman out of the world, and, now that they knew her to be gone, had no further concern for her. All had something to do, either husbands to get off to work or labors of their own to perform.

A little woman with a weak voice finally changed the current of talk by saying, "Well, I guess I kin stay: there's some cold things at home that my man kin git, an' the childern'll git off to school by themselves. They'll all understand."

"That's right, Melissy Davis," said a hard-faced woman who had gone on about some work she was doing, without taking any notice of the clamorous deserters, "an' I'll stay with you. I guess I've got about as much work to do as any of you," she added, casting a cold glance at the women who were now wrapped up and ready to depart, "an' I wasn't so much of a friend of Margar't's as some of you, but on an occasion like this I know what dooty is." And Miss Hester Prime closed her lips in a very decided fashion.

"Oh, well, some folks is so well off in money an' time that they kin afford to be liberal with a pore creature like Margar't, even ef they didn't have nothin' to do with her before she died."

Miss Prime's face grew sterner as she replied, "Margar't Brent wasn't my kind durin' life, an' that I make no bones o' sayin' here an' now; but when she got down on the bed of affliction I done what I could fur her along with the best of you; an' you, Mandy Warren, that's seen me here day in an' day out, ought to be the last one to deny that. Furthermore, I didn't advise her to leave her husband, as some people did, but I did put in a word an' help her to work so's to try to keep her straight afterwards, though it ain't fur me to be a-braggin' about what I done, even to offset them that didn't do nothin'."

This parting shot told, and Mrs. Warren flared up like a wax light. "It's a wonder yore old tracts an' the help you give her didn't keep her sober sometimes."

"Ef I couldn't keep her sober, I wasn't one o' them that set an' took part with her when she was gittin' drunk."

"'Sh! 'sh!" broke in Mrs. Davis: "ef I was you two I wouldn't go on that way. Margar't's dead an' gone now, an' what's past is past. Pore soul, she had a hard enough time almost to drive her to destruction; but it's all over now, an' we ought to put her away as peaceful as possible."

The women who had all been in such a hurry had waited at the prospect of an altercation, but, seeing it about to blow over, they be-thought themselves of their neglected homes and husbands, and passed out behind the still irate Mrs. Warren, who paused long enough in ear-shot to say, "I hope that spiteful old maid'll have her hands full."

The scene within the room which the women had just left was anything but an inviting one. The place was miserably dirty. Margaret had never been a particularly neat housewife, even in her well days. The old rag carpet which disfigured the floor was worn into shreds and blotched with grease, for the chamber was cooking- and dining- as well as sleeping-room. A stove, red with rust, struggled to send forth some heat. The oily black kerosene lamp sent a sickly yellow flame through the grimy chimney.

On a pallet in one corner lay a child sleeping; on the bed, covered with a dingy sheet, lay the stark form out of which the miserable life had so lately passed.

The women opened the blinds, blew out the light, and began performing the necessary duties for the dead.

"Anyhow, let her body go clean before her Maker," said Miss Hester Prime, severely.

"Don't be too hard on the pore soul, Miss Hester," returned Mrs. Davis. "She had a hard time of it. I knowed Margar't when she wasn't so low down as in her last days."

"She oughtn't never to 'a' left her husband."

"Oh, ef you'd 'a' knowed him as I did, Miss Hester, you wouldn't never say that. He was a brute: sich beatin's as he used to give her when he was in liquor you never heerd tell of."

"That was hard, but as long as he was a husband he was a protection to her name."

"True enough. Protection is a good dish, but a beatin's a purty bitter sauce to take with it."

"I wonder what's ever become of Brent."

"Lord knows. No one 'ain't heerd hide ner hair o' him sence he went away from town. People thought that he was a-hangin' around tryin' to git a chance to kill Mag after she got her divorce from him, but all at once he packed off without sayin' a word to anybody. I guess he's drunk himself to death by this time."

When they had finished with Margaret, the women set to work to clean up the house. The city physician who had attended the dead woman in her last hours had reported the case for county burial, and the undertaker was momentarily expected.

"We'll have to git the child up an' git his pallet out of the way, so the floor kin be swept."

"A body hates to wake the pore little motherless dear."

"Perhaps, after all, the child is better off without her example."

"Yes, Miss Hester, perhaps; but a mother, after all, is a mother."

"Even sich a one as this?"

"Even sich a one as this."

Mrs. Davis bent over the child, and was about to lift him, when he stirred, opened his eyes, and sat up of his own accord. He appeared about five years of age. He might have been a handsome child, but hardship and poor feeding had taken away his infantile plumpness, and he looked old and haggard, even beneath the grime on his face. The kindly woman lifted him up and began to dress him.

"I want my mamma," said the child.

Neither of the women answered: there was something tugging at their heart-strings that killed speech.

Finally the little woman said, "I don't know ef we did right to let him sleep through it all, but then it was sich a horrible death."

When she had finished dressing the child, she led him to the bed and showed him his mother's face. He touched it with his little grimy finger, and then, as if, young as he was, the realization of his bereavement had fully come to him, he burst into tears.

Miss Hester turned her face away, but Mrs. Davis did not try to conceal her tears. She took the boy up in her arms and comforted him the best she could.

"Don't cry, Freddie," she said; "don't cry; mamma's—restin'. Ef you don't care, Miss Prime, I'll take him over home an' give him some breakfast, an' leave him with my oldest girl, Sophy. She kin stay out o' school to-day. I'll bring you back a cup o' tea, too; that is, ef you ain't afearred——"

"A feared o' what?" exclaimed Miss Prime, turning on her.

"Well, you know, Miss Hester, bein' left alone—ah—some people air funny about——"

"I'm no fool, Melissy Davis. Take the child an' go on."

Miss Hester was glad of the chance to be sharp. It covered the weakness to which she had almost given way at sight of the child's grief. She bustled on about her work when Mrs. Davis was gone, but her brow was knit into a wrinkle of deep thought. "A mother is a mother, after all," she mused aloud, "even sich a one."

CHAPTER II.

FOR haste, for unadulterated despatch, commend me to the county burying. The body politic is busy and has no time to waste on an inert human body. It does its duty to its own interest and to the pauper dead when the body is dropped with all celerity into the ground. The county is philosophical: it says, "Poor devil, the world was unkind to him: he'll be glad to get out of it: we'll be doing him a favor to put him at the earliest moment out of sight and sound and feeling of the things that wounded him. Then, too, the quicker the cheaper, and that will make it easier on the tax-payers." This latter is so comforting! So the order is written, the funeral is rushed through, and

the county goes home to its dinner, feeling well satisfied with itself,—so potent are the consolations of philosophy at so many hundreds per year.

To this general order poor Margaret's funeral proved no exception. The morning after her decease she was shrouded and laid in her cheap pine coffin to await those last services which, in a provincial town, are the meed of saint and sinner alike. The room in which she lay was very clean,—unnaturally so,—from the attention of Miss Prime. Clean muslin curtains had been put up at the windows, and the one cracked mirror which the house possessed had been covered with white cloth. The lace-like carpet had been taken off the floor, and the boards had been scrubbed white. The little stove in the corner, now cold, was no longer red with rust. In a tumbler on a little table at Margaret's head stood the only floral offering that gave a touch of tenderness to the grim scene,—a bunch of home-grown scarlet and white geraniums. Some woman had robbed her wintered room of this bit of brightness for the memory of the dead. The perfume of the flowers mingled heavily with the faint odor which pervades the chamber of death,—an odor that is like the reminiscence of sorrow.

Like a spirit of order, with solemn face and quiet tread, Miss Hester moved about the room, placing one thing here, another there, but ever doing or changing something, all with maidenly neatness. What a childish fancy this is of humanity's, tiptoeing and whispering in the presence of death, as if one by an incautious word or a hasty step might wake the sleeper from such deep repose!

The service had been set for two o'clock in the afternoon. One or two women had already come in to "sit," but by half-past one the general congregation began to arrive and to take their places. They were mostly women. The hour of the day was partially responsible for this; but then men do not go to funerals anyway, if they can help it. They do not revel, like their sisters, in the exquisite pleasure of sorrow. Most of the women had known pain and loss themselves, and came with ready sympathy, willing, nay, anxious, to be moved to tears. Some of them came dragging by one hand children, dressed stiffly, uncomfortably, and ludicrously,—a medley of soiled ribbons, big collars, wide bows, and very short knickerbockers. The youngsters were mostly curious and ill-mannered, and ever and anon one had to be slapped by its mother into snivelling decorum.

Mrs. Davis came in with one of her own children and leading the dead woman's boy by the hand. At this a buzz of whispered conversation began.

"Pore little dear," said one, as she settled the bow more securely under her own boy's sailor collar,—*"pore little dear, he's all alone in the world."*

"I never did see in all my life sich a young child look so sad," said another.

"H'm!" put in a third; "in this world pore motherless childern has plenty o' reason to look sad, I tell you."

She brushed the tears off the cheek of her little son whom she had slapped a moment before. She was tender now.

One woman bent down and whispered into her child's ear, as she pointed with one cotton-gloved finger, "See, Johnny, see little Freddie, there; he 'ain't got no mother no more. Pore little Freddie! ain't you sorry fur him?" The child nodded, and gazed with open-eyed wonder at "little Freddie" as if he were a new species.

The curtains, stirred by the blast through the loose windows, flapped dismally, and the people drew their wraps about them, for the fireless room was cold. Steadily, insistently, the hive-like drone of conversation murmured on.

"I wonder who's a-goin' to preach the funeral," asked one.

"Oh, Mr. Simpson, from Cory Chapel, of course: she used to go to that church years ago, you know, before she backslid."

"That's jest what I've allus said about people that falls from grace. You know the last state o' that man is worse than the first."

"Ah, that's true enough."

"It's a-puttin' yore hand to the ploughshare an' then turnin' back."

"I wonder what the preacher'll have to say fur her. It's a mighty hard case to preach about."

"I'm wonderin' too what he'll say, an' where he'll preach her."

"Well, it's hard to tell. You know he an' his people believe that there's salvation to be found 'between the stirrup an' the ground.'"

"It's a mighty comfortin' doctern, too."

"An' then they do say that she left some dyin' testimony; though I 'ain't never heerd tell the straight of it."

"He can't preach her into heaven, o' course, after her life. Least-ways, it don't hardly seem like it would be right an' proper."

"Well, I don't think he kin preach her into hell, neither. After a woman has gone through all that pore Margar't has, it seems to me that the Lord ought to give her some consideration, even if men don't."

"I do declare, Seely Matthews, with yore free thinkin' an' free speakin', you're put' nigh a infidel."

"No, I ain't no infidel, neither, but I ain't one o' them that sings, 'When all thy mercies, O my God,' and thinks o' the Lord as if He was a great big cruel man."

"Well, I don't neither; but——"

"'Sh! 'sh!'"

The woman's declaration of principle was cut short by the entrance of the minister, the Rev. Mr. Simpson. He was a tall, gaunt man, in a coat of rusty black. His hair, of an indeterminate color, was slightly mixed with gray. A pair of bright gray eyes looked out from underneath bushy eyebrows. His lips were close set. His bony hands were large and ungainly. The Rev. Mr. Simpson had been a carpenter before he was "called." He went immediately to the stand where lay the Bible and hymn-book. He was followed by a man who had entered with him,—a man with soft eyes and a kindly face. He was as tall as the pastor, and slender, but without the other's gauntness. He was evidently a church official of some standing.

With strange inappropriateness, the preacher selected and gave out the hymn

Sister, thou wast mild and lovely,
Gentle as the summer's breeze.

With some misgivings, it was carried through in the wavering treble of the women and the straggling bass of the few men : then the kindly-faced man, whom the preacher addressed as "Brother Hodges," knelt and offered prayer. The supplication was very tender and child-like. Even by the light of faith he did not seek to penetrate the veil of divine intention, nor did he throw his javelin of prayer straight against the Deity's armor of eternal reserve. He left all to God, as a child lays its burden at its father's feet, and many eyes were moist as the people rose from their knees.

The sermon was a noisy and rather inconsequential effort. The preacher had little to say, but he roared that little out in a harsh, unmusical voice, accompanied by much slapping of his hands and pounding of the table. Towards the end he lowered his voice and began to play upon the feelings of his willing hearers, and when he had won his meed of sobs and tears, when he had sufficiently probed all wounds and made them bleed afresh, when he had conjured up dead sorrows from the grave, when he had obscured the sun of heavenly hope with the vapors of earthly grief, he sat down, satisfied.

The people went forward, some curiously, some with sympathy, to look their last on the miserable dead. Mrs. Davis led the weeping child forward and held him up for a last gaze on his mother's face. The poor geraniums were wiped and laid by the dead hands, and then the undertaker glided in like a stealthy, black-garmented ghost. He screwed the pine top down, and the coffin was borne out to the hearse. He clucked to his horses, and, with Brother Hodges and the preacher in front, and Mrs. Davis, Miss Prime, and the motherless boy behind, the little funeral train moved down the street towards the graveyard, a common but pathetic spectacle.

Mrs. Warren had remained behind to attend to the house. She watched the short procession out of sight. "I guess Margar't didn't have no linen worth havin'," she said to herself, "but I'll jest look." And look she did, but without success. In disappointment and disgust she went out and took the streamer of dusty black and dingy white crape from the door where it had fluttered, and, bringing it in, laid it on the empty trestles, that the undertaker might find it when he came for them. She took the cloth off the mirror, and then, with one searching look around to see that she had missed nothing worth taking, she went out, closing and locking the door behind her.

"I guess I'm as much entitled to anything Mag had as any one else," said Mrs. Warren.

CHAPTER III.

By common consent, and without the formality of publication or proclamation, the women had agreed to meet on the day after the funeral for the purpose of discussing what was best to be done with the boy Fred. From the moment that Mrs. Davis had taken charge of

him, he had shown a love for and confidence in her that had thoroughly touched that good woman's heart. She would have liked nothing better than to keep him herself. But there were already five hungry little Davises, and any avoidable addition to the family was out of the question. To be sure, in the course of time there were two more added to the number, but that was unavoidable, and is neither here nor there. The good woman sat looking at the boy the night after his mother had been laid away. He sat upon the floor among her own children, playing in the happy forgetfulness of extreme youth. But to the mother's keen eye there was still a vague sadness in his bearing. Involuntarily, the scene and conditions were changed, and, instead of poor Margaret, she herself had passed away and was lying out there in a new-made grave in bleak and dreary Woodland. She thought how her own bairns would be as motherless and forlorn as the child before her, and yet not quite, either, for they had a father who loved them in his own quiet undemonstrative way. This should have consoled her in the sorrows she had conjured up, but, like a woman, she thought of the father helpless and lonely when she had gone, with the children huddled cheerlessly about him, and a veil of tears came between her and the youngsters on the floor. With a great rush of tenderness, she went and picked the motherless boy up and laid his head on her breast.

"Pore Freddie," she said, "I wish you could stay here all the time and play with the other little ones."

The child looked up at her with wondering eyes. "I kin stay till mamma comes back," he answered.

"But, Freddie dear, mamma won't come back any more. She's"—the woman hesitated—"she's in heaven."

"I want my mamma to come back," moaned the child. "I don't want her to stay in heaven."

"But you musn't cry, Freddie; an', some day, you kin go an' see mamma."

The child's curiosity got the better of his grief. He asked, "Is heaven far, Mis' Davis?"

"Yes, dear, awful far," she answered. But she was wrong. Heaven is not far from the warm heart and tender hands of a good woman.

The child's head drooped, and he drowsed in her arms.

"Put him to bed, Melissy,—pore little fellow," said her husband, in husky tones. He had been listening and watching them around the edge of his paper. The child slept on, while the woman undressed him and laid him in the bed.

On the morrow the women dropped in one by one, until a half-dozen or more were there, to plan the boy's future. They were all poor, and most of them had families of their own. But all hoped that there might be some plan devised whereby Margaret's boy might find a refuge without going to the orphan asylum, an institution which is the detestation of women. Mrs. Davis, in expressing her feelings, expressed those of all the others: "I hate so to think of the pore little feller goin' to one o' them childern's homes. The boys goin' around in them there drab clothes o' theirs allus look like pris'ners to me, an' they ain't much better off."

"An' then childern do learn so much weekedness in them places from the older ones," put in another.

"Oh, as fur that matter, he'll learn devilment soon enough anywhere," snapped Mrs. Warren, "with that owdacious father o' his before him. I wouldn't take the child by no means, though his mother an' me was friends, fur blood's bound to tell, an' with sich blood as he's got in him I don't know what he'll come to, an' I'm shore I don't want to be a-raisin' no gallus-birds."

The women felt rather relieved that Mrs. Warren so signally washed her hands of Freddie. That was one danger he had escaped. The woman in question had, as she said, been a close friend of Margaret's, and, as such, an aider in her habits of intemperance. It had been apprehended that her association with the mother might lead her to take the child.

"I'd like to take Freddie myself," Mrs. Davis began again, "but with my five, an' John out o' work half the time, another mouth to feed an' another pair o' feet to cover would mean a whole lot. Though I do think that ef I was dead an' my childern was sent to that miserable orphans' home, I'd turn over in my grave."

"It's a pity we don't know some good family that 'ain't got no childern that 'ud take him an' bring him up as their own son," said a little woman who took *The Hearthside*.

"Sich people ain't growin' on trees no place about Dexter," Mrs. Warren sniffed.

"Well, I'm sure I've read of sich things."

"You couldn't give us no idee what to do, could you, Mis' Austin?"

"Lord love you, Mis' Davis, I've jest been a-settin' here purty nigh a-thinkin' my head off, but I 'ain't seen a gleam of light yit. You know how I feel an' jest how glad I'd be to do something, but then my man growls about the three we've got."

"That's jest the way with my man," said the little woman who took her ideas of life from the literature in *The Hearthside*. "He allus says that pore folks oughtn't to have so many childern."

"Well, it's a blessin' that Margar't didn't have no more, fur goodness knows it's hard enough disposin' o' this one."

Just then a tap came at Mrs. Davis's door, and she opened it to admit Miss Hester Prime.

"I'm ruther late gittin' here," said the new-comer, "but I've been a-neglectin' my work so in the last couple o' days that I've had a power of it to do to-day to ketch up."

"Oh, we're so glad you've come!" said one of the women. "Mebbe you kin help us out of our fix. We're in sich a fix about little Freddie."

"We don't want to send the pore little dear to the childern's home," broke in another.

"It's sich an awful place fur young childern——"

"An' they do look so pitiful——"

"An' learn so much weekedness."

And, as is the manner of women in council, they all began talking at once, pouring into the new-comer's ears all the suggestions and

objections, hopes and fears, that had been made or urged during their conference.

To it all Miss Hester listened, and there was a soft glow on her face the while; but then she had been walking, which may account for the flush. The child, all unconscious that his destiny was being settled, was playing with two of the little Davises at the other end of the room. The three days of good food, good treatment, and pleasant surroundings had told on him, and he looked less forlorn and more like the child that he was. He was clean. His brown eyes were sparkling with amusement, and his brown hair was brushed up into the damp "roach" so dear to a woman's heart. He was, thus, a far less forbidding sight than on the morning of his mother's death, when, dingy and haggard, he rose from his dirty pallet. As she listened to the varied remarks of her associates, Miss Hester allowed her eyes to wander to the child's face, and for a moment a tenderer expression grew about her lips, but in an instant it was gone, and, as if she had been near committing herself to folly, she made amends by drawing her countenance into more than its usually severe lines.

Mrs. Warren, who was always ready with a stab, and who had not forgotten her encounter of two days ago, spoke up with a little malicious laugh. "Miss Hester 'ain't got no family: mebbe she might take the child. 'Pears like she ought to be fond o' childern."

Mrs. Davis immediately came to the rescue. "We don't expect no sich thing of Miss Hester. She's never been around childern, an' don't know nothin' about takin' keer o' them; an' boys air hard to manage, anyhow."

"Oh, I should think Miss Hester could manage 'most anything," was the sneering rejoinder.

The women were aghast at such insolence. They didn't know what the effect might be on Miss Prime. They looked at her in alarm. Her cold gray eye impaled Mrs. Warren for an instant only, and then, paying no more attention to her, she said, quietly, "I was thinkin' this whole matter over while I was finishin' up my work to come here, an' says I to myself, 'Now there's Melissy Davis,—she's the very one that 'ud be a mother to that child,' says I, 'an' she'd bring him up right as a child should be brought up.' I don't know no more mannerly, nice-appearin' children in this neighborhood, or the whole town, fur that matter, than Melissy's——"

"Oh, Miss Hester!" faltered Mrs. Davis.

But Miss Prime went on, unheeding the interruption. "Thinks I, 'Melissy's got a houseful already, an' she can't take another.' Then you comes into my mind, Mis' Austin, an' says I, 'La me! she's got three herself, an' is young yit; she'll have her hands full to look after her own family.' Well, I thought of you all, an' some of you had families, an' some of you had to go out fur day's work; an' then there's some people's hands I wouldn't want to see the child fall into." (This with an annihilating glance in Mrs. Warren's direction.) "You know what the Bible says about the sins of the father; well, that child needs proper raisin': so in this way the Lord showed it to me that it was my dooty to take the burden up myself."

First there was an absolute silence of utter astonishment, and then, "Oh, Miss Hester!" broke from a full chorus of voices.

"You don't reelly mean it, Miss Hester?" said Mrs. Davis.

"I do that; but I want you all to understand that it ain't a matter of pleasure or desire with me; it's dooty. Ef I see a chance to save a soul from perdition an' don't take it, I am responsible, myself, to the Lord for that soul."

The women were almost too astounded to speak, Mrs. Warren not less than the rest of them. She had made her suggestion in derision, and here it was being acted upon in sober earnest. She was entirely routed.

"Now, Melissy, ef there ain't no one that disagrees with me, you might as well pack up what few things the child has, an' I'll take him along."

No one objected, and the few things were packed up. "Come, Freddie," said Mrs. Davis, tremulously, "get on yore hat." The child obeyed. "You're a-goin' to be Miss Hester's little boy now. You must be good."

Miss Prime held out her hand to him, but the child drew back and held to his protectress's skirt. A hurt expression came into the spinster's face. It was as if the great sacrifice she was making was being belittled and rejected by a child. Mrs. Warren laughed openly.

"Come, Freddie, be nice now, dear; go with Miss Hester."

"I want to stay with you," cried the child.

"Pore little dear!" chorussed the women.

"But Mis' Davis can't keep the little boy; now he must go with Miss Prime, an' sometimes he kin come an' see Mis' Davis an' play with John an' Harriet. Won't that be nice?"

"I want to stay with you."

"Come, Frederick," said Miss Prime.

"Go now, like a good boy," repeated Mrs. Davis. "Here's a copper fur you; take it in yore little hand,—that's a man. Now kiss me good-by. Kiss John an' Harriet."

The child, seeing that he must go, had given up resistance, and, doing as he was bidden, took Miss Prime's hand, sobbingly. Some of us do not learn so soon to bow to the inevitable.

"Good-by, ladies. I must git back to my work," said Miss Hester.

"Good-by, good-by, Miss Hester," came the echo.

The moment the door closed behind her and her charge, there was a volley of remarks:

"Oh, I do hope she'll be good to him."

"I wonder how she'll manage him."

"Pore child, he didn't want to go at all."

"Who'd have thought it of Miss Hester?"

"I wish I could have kept him myself," said Mrs. Davis, tearfully.

"It hurt my heart to see him cling to me so."

"Never you mind, Melissy Davis; you've done yore whole dooty as well as you could."

Mrs. Warren rose and put her shawl over her head preparatory to

going. "As fur my part," she said, "I'd 'a' ruther seen that child in the children's home, devilment or no devilment, than where he is. He won't dare to breathe from this hour on."

The women were silent for a moment, and then Mrs. Davis said, "Well, Miss Hester's well-meanin'."

CHAPTER IV.

AT the top of the mean street on which Margaret's house was situated, and looking down upon its meaner neighbors in much the same way that its mistress looked upon the denizens of the street, stood Miss Prime's cottage. It was not on the mean street,—it would have disdained to be,—but sat exactly facing it in prim watchfulness over the unsavory thoroughfare which ran at right angles. The cottage was one and a half stories in height, and the upper half-story had two windows in front that looked out like a pair of accusing eyes. It was painted a dull lead color. In summer the front yard was filled with flowers, hollyhocks, bachelor's-buttons, sweet-william, and a dozen other varieties of blooms. But they were planted with such exactness and straightness that the poor flowers looked cramped and artificial and stiff as a party of angular ladies dressed in bombazine. Here was no riot nor abandon in growth. Everything had its place, and stayed therein or was plucked up.

"I jest can't abide to see flowers growin' every which way," Miss Prime used to remark, "fur all the world like a neighborhood with different people's children traipsin' through everybody else's house. Everything in order, is my motto."

Miss Hester had nearly arrived at her fortieth mile-stone; and she effected the paradox of looking both younger and older than her age. Younger, because she had always taken excellent care of herself: her form had still much of the roundness of youth, and her step was sprightly and firm. She looked older than her age, because of the strong lines in her face, the determined set of her lips, and the general air of knowledge and self-sufficiency which pervaded her whole being. Throughout her life she had sacrificed everything to duty, whether it was the yearning of her own heart or the feelings of those who loved her. In the world about her she saw so much of froth and frivolity that she tried to balance matters by being especially staid and stern herself. She did not consider that in the seesaw of life it takes more than one person to toss up the weight of the world's wickedness. Her existence was governed by rigid rules, from which she never departed.

It is hard to explain just what Miss Hester's position was among the denizens of the poorer quarter. She was liked and disliked, admired and feared. She would descend upon her victims with unasked counsel and undesired tracts. Her voice was a trumpet of scathing invective against their shiftlessness, their untidiness, and their immorality, but her hand was as a horn of plenty in straitened times, and her presence in sickness was a comfort. She made no pretence to being

good-hearted; in fact, she resented the term as applied to herself. It was all duty with her.

Up through the now dismantled garden to the prim cottage she led the boy Fred. The child had not spoken a word since he had left the house of his friend. His little heart seemed to be suddenly chilled within him. Miss Hester had been equally silent. Her manner was constrained and embarrassed. She had, indeed, tried to find some words of soothing and encouragement to say to the child, such as she had heard Melissa Davis use; but she could not. They were not a part of her life's vocabulary. Several times she had essayed to speak, but the sentences that formed in her mind seemed so absurd and awkward that she felt them better unsaid.

It is true that every natural woman has the maternal instinct, but unless she has felt the soft face of a babe at her breast and looked down into its eyes as it drew its life from her life, she can know nothing of that freemasonry of womanhood which, by some secret means too deep and subtle for the knowledge of outsiders, wins the love of childhood. It is not so with men, because the childish mind does not demand so much of them, even though they be fathers. To be convinced, look about you and see how many more bachelors than maids are favorites with children.

Once within the house, Miss Hester was at an entire loss as to what to do with her charge. She placed him in a chair, where he sat disconsolately. She went to the book-shelves and laid her hand upon "Pilgrim's Progress;" then she reflected that Freddie was just five years old, and she allowed a smile to pass over her face. But her perplexity instantly chased the expression away. "How on airth am I a-goin' to do any work?" she asked herself. "I'm shore I can't set down an' tell that child stories all the time, as I've heerd tell o' folks doin'." What shall I do with him?" She had had a vague idea that the time of children was taken up in some way. She knew, of course, that they had to be washed and dressed, that they had to eat three times a day, and after all to sleep; but what was to be done with them in the mean time?

"Oh," sighed the poor woman, "if he was only old enough to go to school!" The wish was not entirely unmotherly, as motherhood goes in these days, for too many mothers send their babes off to a kindergarten as soon as they begin to babble, in order to be relieved of the responsibility of their care. But neither wishes nor hopes availed. It was a living, present situation with which Miss Hester had to grapple. Suddenly she bethought herself that children like pictures, and she secured from the shelf a copy of the "Bible Looking-Glass." This she opened and spread out on the child's knees. He glanced at it a moment or two, and then began to turn the leaves, his eyes riveted on the engravings. Miss Hester congratulated herself, and slipped out to work. The thought came to her, of course, that the novelty of "Bible Looking-Glasses" couldn't remain forever, but she put the idea by in scorn. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The book was good while it lasted. It entertained the child and gave him valuable moral lessons. This was the woman's point of view. To Fred there

was no suggestion of moral lessons. It was merely a lot of very fine pictures, and when Miss Prime had gone he relaxed some of his disconsolate stiffness and entered into the contemplation of them with childish zest. His guardian, however, did not abandon her vigilance, and in a few minutes she peeped through the door from the kitchen, where she was working, to see how her charge got on. The sight which met her eyes made her nearly drop the cup which she held in her hand and with which she had been measuring out flour for a cupcake. With the book spread out before him, Freddie was lying flat on his stomach on the floor, with his little heels contentedly kicking the air. His attitude was the expression of the acme of childish satisfaction.

Miss Prime's idea of floors was that they were to be walked on, scrubbed, measured, and carpeted; she did not remember in all the extent of her experience to have seen one used as a reading-desk before. But she withdrew without a word: the child was quiet, and that was much.

About this time, any one observing the cottage would have seen an old-fashioned phaeton, to which a plump old nag was hitched, driven up to the door and halted, and a man alight and enter at the gate. If the observer had been at Margaret's funeral, he would instantly have recognized the man as the Rev. Mr. Simpson's assistant, Mr. Hodges. The man walked deliberately around to the kitchen, and, tapping at the door, opened it without ceremony and went in, calling out, "Miss Hester, Miss Hester, I'm a-runnin' right in on you."

"I do declare, 'Liphalet Hodges, you do beat all fur droppin' in on a body at unexpected times."

"Well, I guess you're right. My comin's a good deal like the second comin' o' the Son o' man'll be. I guess you're right."

To Miss Prime, Eliphalet Hodges was always unexpected, although he had been dropping in this way before her mother and father died, twenty years gone.

"Well, I 'low, 'Liphalet, that you've heerd the news."

"There ain't no grass grows under the feet of the talkers in this town, I tell you."

"Dear me! a body can't turn aroun' without settin' a whole forest of tongues a-waggin' every which way."

"Oh, well, Miss Hester, we got to 'low that to yore sex. The women folks must talk."

"My sex! It ain't my sex only: I know plenty o' men in this town who air bigger gossips 'n the women. I'll warrant you didn't git this piece o' news from no woman."

"Well, mebbe I didn't, but I ca'c'late there wa'n't no men there to git it fust hand."

"Oh, I'll be bound some o' the women had to go an' tell a man the fust thing: some women can't git along without the men."

"An' then, ag'in, some of 'em kin, Miss Hester; some of 'em kin."

"You'd jest as well start out an' say what you want to say without a-beatin' about the bush. I know, jest as well as I know I'm a-livin',

that you've come to tell me that I was a fool fur takin' that child. 'Liphalet, don't pertend: I know it."

"Oh, no, Miss Hester; I wouldn't dast do nothin' like that; you know, 'He that calleth his brother a fool is in danger o' hell fire,' an' I 'low the Lord don't make it no easier when it happens to be a sister. No, Miss Hester, you know yore own business best, an' you've got along this fur without bein' guided by people. I guess you'll git through; but a child, Miss Hester, don't you think that it's a leetle bit resky?"

"Resky? I don't see why. The child ain't a-goin' to eat me or burn the house down."

"No, no,—none o' that,—I don't mean that at all; but then, you see, you 'ain't never had no—that is—you 'ain't had much experunce in the bringin' up o' childern, specially boys."

"Much! I 'ain't had none. But I've been brought up."

"That's true, that's true, an' a mighty good job yore mother made of it, too. I don't know of no spryer or stirrin'er woman around here at yore age."

"At my age! 'Liphalet, you do talk as ef I was about fifty."

"Well, ef I do, I ain't a-sayin' what I want to say, so I'd better hush. Where is the little fellow?"

For answer, Miss Prime pushed the door open and bade him peep. Freddie was still upon the floor, absorbed in his book. The man's face lighted up: he pulled the door to long enough to say, "I tell you, Miss Hester, that boy's a-goin' to make a great reader or a speaker or somethin'. Jest look how wrapped up he is in that book."

"Well, I do hope an' pray to goodness that he'll make somethin' better than his father ever made."

"Ef he don't under yore trainin', it'll be because there ain't nothin' in him.—Come here, Freddie," called Hodges, pushing the door open, and holding out his hand with a smile. The child got up from the floor and came and put his hand in the outstretched one.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Miss Hester. "I tried my level best to git that child to make up with me, an' he wouldn't."

"It's jest like I say, Miss Hester: you 'ain't never had no experunce in raisin' childern."

"An' how many have you ever raised, 'Liphalet?"

The bachelor acknowledged defeat by a sheepish smile, and turned again to the child. "You want to go a-ridin' in my buggy, Freddie?"

"Yes, sir," said the child, unhesitatingly.

"All right; Uncle 'Liph 'll take him out fur a while. Git his hat an' wrap him up, Miss Hester, so Jack Frost can't ketch him."

The man stood smiling down into the child's face: the boy, smiling back, tightened his grasp on the big hand. They were friends from that moment, Eliphalet Hodges and Fred.

They went out to the old phaeton, with Miss Prime's parting injunction ringing after them, "Don't keep that child out in the cold too long, 'Liphalet, an' bring him back here croupy."

"Oh, now, don't you trouble yoreself, Miss Hester: me an' Freddie air a-goin' to git along all right. We ain't a-goin' to freeze, air we,

Freddie, boy? Ah, not by a long sight; not ef Uncle 'Liph knows hisself."

All the time the genial man was talking, he was tucking the laprobe snugly about the child and making him comfortable. Then he clucked to the old mare, and they rattled away.

There was a far-away look in Miss Prime's eyes as she watched them till they turned the corner and were out of sight. "I never did see sich a man as 'Liphalet Hodges. Why, a body'd think that he'd been married an' raised a whole houseful o' childern. He's worse 'n a old hen. An' it's marvellous the way Frederick took to him. Everybody calls the child Freddie. I must learn to call him that: it will make him feel more home-like, though it does sound foolish."

She went on with her work, but it was interrupted every now and then by strange fits of abstraction and revery, an unusual thing for this bustling and practical spinster. But then there are few of us but have had our hopes and dreams, and it would be unfair to think that Miss Hester was an exception. For once she had broken through her own discipline, and in her own kitchen was spending precious moments in dreams, and all because a man and a child had rattled away in a rickety buggy.

CHAPTER V.

"GOODNESS gracious, Mis' Smith," exclaimed Mrs. Martin, rushing excitedly into the house of her next-door neighbor, "you'd ought to seen what I seen jest now."

"Do tell, Mis' Martin! What on airth was it?"

"Oh, I'm shore you'd never guess in the wide, wide world."

"An' I'm jest as shore that I ain't a-goin' to pester my head tryin' to: so go on an' tell me what it was."

"Lawdy me! what next'll happen, an' what does things mean, anyhow?"

"I can't tell you. Fur my part, I 'ain't heerd what 'things' air yit." Mrs. Smith was getting angry.

"My! Mis' Smith, don't git so impatient. Give me time to git my breath: it'll be enough, when I do tell you, to take away yore breath, jest like it did mine."

"Sallie Martin, you do beat all fur keepin' a body on the hooks."

"'Tain't my fault, Mis' Smith. I declare I'm too astonished to speak. You know I was a-standin' in my window, not a-thinkin' nor expectin' nothin', jest like any person would, you know——"

"Yes, yes; go on."

"I was jest a-lookin' down the street, careless, when who should I see drive up to Miss Prime's door, an' hitch his hoss an' go in, but Brother 'Liphalet Hodges!"

"Well, sakes alive, Sallie Martin, I hope you ain't a-considerin' that strange. Why, you could 'a' seen that very same sight any time these fifteen years."

"But wait a minute till I tell you. I ain't done yit, by no means.

The strange part 'ain't come. I thought I'd jest wait at the window and see how long Brother Hodges would stay: not that it was any o' my bus'ness, of course, or that I wanted to be a-spyin' on anybody, but sorter fur—fur cur'osity, you know."

"Cert'n'y," said Mrs. Smith, feelingly. She could sympathize with such a sentiment.

"Well, after a while he come out a-smilin' as pleasant as a basket o' chips; an' I like to fell through the winder, fur he was a-leadin' by the hand—who do you suppose?"

"I 'ain't got a mortal idea who," said Mrs. Smith, "unless it was Miss Hester, an' they're married at last."

"No, indeed, 'twan't her. It was that little Brent boy that his mother died the other day."

"Sallie Martin, what air you a-tellin' me?"

"It's the gospel truth, Melviny Smith, as shore as I'm a-settin' here. Now what does it mean?"

"The good Lord only knows. Leadin' that little Brent boy? Ef it wasn't you a-settin' there tellin' me this, Mis' Martin, I wouldn't believe it. You don't suppose Hodges has took him to raise, do you?"

"How in the name of mercy is he goin' to raise any child, when there ain't no women folks about his house 'ceptin' old Marier, an' she so blind an' rheumatically that she kin sca'cely git about?"

"Well, what's he a-doin' with the child, then?"

"That's jest what I'm a-goin' to find out. I'm a-goin' down to Miss Prime's. Len' me yore shawl, Melviny."

"You ain't never goin' to dare to ask her, air you?"

"You jest trust me to find things out without givin' myself away. I won't never let her know what I want right out, but I'll talk it out o' her."

"What a woman you air, Sallie Martin!" said Mrs. Smith, admiringly. "But do hurry back an' tell me what she says: I'm jest dyin' to know."

"I'll be back in little or no time, because I can't stay, nohow."

Mrs. Martin threw the borrowed shawl over her head and set off down the street. She and her friend were not dwellers on the mean street, and so they could pretend to so nearly an equal social footing with Miss Prime as to admit of an occasional neighborly call.

Through the window Miss Prime saw her visitor approaching, and a grim smile curved the corners of her mouth. "Comin' fur news," muttered the spinster. "She'll git all she wants before she goes." But there was no trace of suspicion in her manner as she opened the door at Mrs. Martin's rap.

"Hey oh, Miss Hester, busy as usual, I see."

"Yes, indeed. People that try to do their dooty 'ain't got much time fur rest in this world."

"No, indeed; it's dig, dig, dig, and work, work, work."

"Take off yore shawl an' set down, Sallie. It's a wonder you don't take yore death o' cold or git plum full o' neuralgy, a-runnin' around in this weather with nothin' but a shawl over yore head."

"La, Miss Hester, they say that worthless people's hard to kill. It ain't allus true, though, fur there was pore Margar't Brent, she wasn't worth much, but, my! she went out like a match."

"Yes, but matches don't go out until their time ef they're held down right; an' it's jest so with people."

"That's true enough, Miss Hester. Was you to Margar't's funeral?"

"Oh, yes, I went."

"Did you go out to the cimetry?"

"Oomph huh."

"Did she look natural?"

"Jest as natural as one could expect after a hard life an' a hard death."

"Pore Margar't!" Mrs. Martin sighed. There was a long and embarrassed silence. Miss Prime's lips were compressed, and she seemed more aggressively busy than usual. She bustled about as if every minute were her last one. She brushed off tables, set chairs to rights, and tried the golden-brown cup-cake with a straw to see if it were done. Her visitor positively writhed with curiosity and discomfiture. Finally she began again. "Margar't only had one child, didn't she?"

"Yes, that was all."

"Pore little lamb. Motherless childern has a hard time of it."

"Indeed, most of 'em do."

"Do you know what's become of the child, Miss Hester?"

"Yes, I do, Sallie Martin, an' you do too, or you wouldn't be a-settin' there beatin' about the bush, askin' me all these questions."

This sudden outburst gave Mrs. Martin quite a turn, but she exclaimed, "I declare to goodness, Miss Hester, I 'ain't heerd a livin' thing about it, only——"

She checked herself, but her relentless hostess caught at the word and demanded, "Only what, Mis' Martin?"

"Well, I seen Brother 'Liphalet Hodges takin' him away from here in his buggy——"

"An' so you come down to see what was what, eh, so's you could be the first to tell the neighborhood?"

"Now, Miss Hester, you know that I ain't one o' them that talks, but I do feel sich an interest in the pore motherless child, an' when I seen Brother Hodges a-takin' him away, I thought perhaps he was a-goin' to take him to raise."

"Well, Brother Hodges ain't a-goin' to take him to raise."

"Mercy sakes! Miss Hester, don't git mad, but who is?"

"I am, that's who."

"Miss Prime, what air you a-sayin'? You shorely don't mean it. What kin you do with a child?"

"I kin train him up in the way he ought to go, an' keep him out o' other people's houses an' the street."

"Well, o' course, that's somethin'," said Mrs. Martin, weakly.

"Somethin'? Why, it's everything."

The visitor had now gotten the information for which she was looking, and was anxious to be gone. She was absolutely bursting with her news.

"Well, I must be goin'," she said, replacing her shawl and standing in embarrassed indecision. "I only run in fur a minute. I hope you 'ain't got no hard feelin's at my inquisitiveness."

"Not a bit of it. You wanted to know, an' you come and asked, that's all."

"I hope you'll git along all right with the child."

"I shan't stop at hopin'. I shall take the matter to the Lord in prayer."

"Yes, He knows best. Good-by, Miss Hester."

"Good-by, Sallie; come in ag'in." The invitation sounded a little bit sarcastic, and once more the grim smile played about Miss Prime's mouth.

"I 'low," she observed to herself, as she took the cake from the oven for the last time, tried it, and set it on the table,— "I 'low that I did give Sallie Martin one turn. I never did see sich a woman fur pryin' into other folks' business."

Swift are the wings of gossip, and swift were the feet of Mrs. Sallie Martin as she hurried back to tell the news to her impatient friend, who listened speechless with enjoyment and astonishment.

"Who would 'a' thought you could 'a' talked it out o' her so?" she gasped.

"Oh, I led her right along tell she told me everything," said Mrs. Martin, with a complacency which, remembering her reception, she was far from feeling.

Shortly after her departure, and while, no doubt, reinforced by Mrs. Smith, she was still watching at the window, 'Liphalet Hodges drove leisurely up to the door again.

"Well, Freddie," he said, as he helped the child to alight, "we've had a great time together, we have, an' we ain't frozen, neither: I told Miss Prime that she needn't be afeared. Don't drop yore jumpin'-jack, now, an' be keerful an' don't git yore hands on yore apron, 'cause they're kind o' sticky. Miss Hester 'ud take our heads off ef we come back dirty."

The child's arms were full of toys,—a jumping-jack, a climbing monkey, a popgun, and the etceteras of childish amusement,—and his pockets and cheeks bulged with candy.

"La, 'Liphalet," exclaimed Miss Prime, when she saw them, "what on airth have you been a-buyin' that child—jumpin'-jacks an' sich things? They ain't a bit o' good, 'ceptin' to litter up a house an' put lightness in childern's minds. Freddie, what's that on yore apron? Goodness me! an' look at them hands—candy! 'Liphalet Hodges, I did give you credit fur better judgment than this. Candy is the cause o' more aches an' pains than poison; an' some of it's reelly colored with ars'nic. How do you expect a child to grow up healthy an' with sound teeth when you feed him on candy?"

"Now, Miss Hester, now, now, now. I don't want to be a-interferin' with yore bus'ness; but it's jest like I said before, an' I will stick to it, you 'ain't never had no experunce in raisin' children. They can't git along jest on meat an' bread an' jam: they need candy—an'—ah—candy—an' sich things." Mr. Hodges ended lamely, looking

rather guiltily at the boy's bulging pockets. "A little bit ain't a-goin' to hurt no child."

"'Liphalet, I've got a dooty to perform towards this motherless child, an' I ain't a-goin' to let no foolish notions keep me from performin' it."

"Miss Hester, I'm a-tryin' to follow Him that was a father to the fatherless an' a husband to the widow,—strange, that was made only to the widow,—an' I've got somethin' of a idee o' dooty myself. You may think I'm purty presumptuous, but I've took a notion into my head to kind o' help along a-raisin' Freddie. I ain't a-goin' to question yore authority, or nothin', but I thought mebbe you'd len' me the child once in a while to kind o' lighten up that old lonesome place o' mine: I know that Freddie won't object."

"Oh, 'Liphalet, do go 'long: I scarcely know whether you air a man or a child, sometimes."

"There's One that says, 'Except you become as a little child'——"

"'Liphalet, will you go 'long home?"

"I 'spect I'd better be gittin' along.—Good-by, Freddie; be a good boy, an' some day I'll take you up to my house an' let you ride old Bess around.—Good-by, Miss Hester." And as he passed out to his buggy he whistled tenderly something that was whistled when he was a boy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE life of one boy is much like that of another. They all have their joys and their griefs, their triumphs and their failures, their loves and their hates, their friends and their foes, much as men have them in that maturer life of which the days of youth are an epitome. It would be rather an uninteresting task, and an entirely thankless one, to follow in detail the career of Frederick Brent as he grew from childhood to youth. But in order to understand certain traits that developed in his character, it will be necessary to note some, at least, of the circumstances that influenced his early life.

While Miss Prime grew to care for him in her own unemotional way, she had her own notions of how a boy should be trained, and those notions seemed to embody the repression of every natural impulse. She reasoned thus: "Human beings are by nature evil: evil must be crushed: *ergo*, everything natural must be crushed." In pursuance of this principle, she followed out a deliberate course of restriction, which, had it not been for the combating influence of Eliphalet Hodges, would have dwarfed the mental powers of the boy and cramped his soul beyond endurance. When he came of an age to play marbles, he was forbidden to play, because it was, to Miss Hester's mind, a species of gambling. Swimming was too dangerous to be for a moment considered. Fishing, without necessity, was wanton cruelty. Flying kites was foolishness and a waste of time.

The boy had shown an aptitude at his lessons that had created in his guardian's mind some ambition for him, and she held him down to

his books with rigid assiduity. He was naturally studious, but the feeling that he was being driven made his tasks repellent, although he performed them without outward sign of rebellion, while he fumed within.

His greatest relaxations were his trips to and from his old friend Hodges. If Miss Prime crushed him, this gentle soul comforted him and smoothed out his ruffled feelings. It was his influence that kept him from despair. Away from his guardian, he was as if a chain that galled his flesh had been removed. And yet he could not hate Miss Hester, for it was constantly impressed upon him that all was being done for his good, and the word "duty" was burned like a fiery cross upon his heart and brain.

There is a bit of the pagan in every natural boy, and to give him too much to reverence taxes his powers until they are worn and impotent by the time he reaches manhood. Under Miss Hester's tutelage, too many things became sacred to Fred Brent. It was wicked to cough in church, as it was a sacrilege to play with a hymn-book. His training was the apotheosis of the non-essential. But, after all, there is no rebel like Nature. She is an iconoclast.

When he was less than ten years old, an incident occurred that will in a measure indicate the manner of his treatment. Miss Prime's prescription was two parts punishment, two parts admonition, and six parts prayer. Accordingly, as the watchful and sympathetic neighbors said, "she an' that pore child fairly lived in church."

It was one class-meeting night, and, as usual, the boy and his guardian were sitting side by side at church. It was the habit of some of the congregation to bring their outside controversies into the classroom under the guise of testimonies or exhortations, and there to air their views where their opponents could not answer them. One such was Daniel Hastings. The trait had so developed in him that whenever he rose to speak, the question ran around, "I wonder who Dan'l's a-goin' to rake over the coals now." On this day he had been having a tilt with his old-time enemy, Thomas Donaldson, over the advent into Dexter of a young homœopathic doctor. With characteristic stubbornness, Dan'l had held that there was no good in any but the old-school medical men, and he sneered at the idea of anybody's being cured with sugar, as he contemptuously termed the pellets and powders affected by the new school. Thomas, who was considered something of a wit and who sustained his reputation by the perpetration of certain time-worn puns, had replied that other hogs were sugar-cured, and why not Dan'l? This had turned the laugh on Hastings, and he went home from the corner grocery, where the men were congregated, in high dudgeon.

Still smarting with the memory of his defeat, when he rose to speak that evening, he cast a glance full of unfriendly significance at his opponent and launched into a fiery exhortation on true religion. "Some folks' religion," he said, "is like sugar, all sweetness and no power; but I want my religion like I want my medicine: I want it strong, an' I want it bitter, so's I'll know I've got it." In Fred Brent the sense of humor had not been entirely crushed, and the expression

was too much for his gravity. He bowed his head and covered his mouth with his hand. He made no sound, but there were three pairs of eyes that saw the movement,—Miss Prime's, Eliphalet Hodges's, and the Rev. Mr. Simpson's. Miss Prime's gaze was horrified, Mr. Simpson's stern; but in the eye of Mr. Hodges there was a most ungodly twinkle.

When Dan'l Hastings had finished his exhortation—which was in reality an arraignment of Thomas Donaldson's medical heresies—and sat down, the Rev. Mr. Simpson arose, and, bending an accusing glance upon the shrinking boy, began: "I perceive on the part of some of the younger members of the congregation a disposition towards levity. The house of God is not the place to find amusement. I never see young people deriding their elders without thinking of the awful lesson taught by the Lord's judgment upon those wicked youths whom the she-bears devoured. I never see a child laughing in church without trembling in spirit for his future. Some of the men whom I have seen in prison, condemned to death or a life of confinement, have begun their careers just in this way, showing disrespect for their elders and for the church. Beware, young people who think you are smart and laugh and titter in the sanctuary; there is a prison waiting for you, there is a hell yawning for you. Behold, there is death in the pot!"

With a terrible look at the boy, Mr. Simpson sat down. There was much craning of necks and gazing about, but few in the church would have known to whom the pastor's remarks were addressed had not Miss Prime, at their conclusion, sighed in an injured way, and, rising, with set lips, led the culprit out, as a criminal is led to the scaffold. How the boy suffered as, with flaming face, he walked down the aisle to the door, the cynosure of all eyes! He saw in the faces about him the accusation of having done a terrible thing, something unheard of and more wicked than he could understand. He felt revolted, child as he was, at the religion that made so much of his fault. Inwardly, he vowed that he would never "get religion" or go into a church when he was big enough to have his own way.

They had not gone far when a step approached them from behind, and Eliphalet Hodges joined them. Miss Prime turned tragically at his greeting, and broke out, "Don't reproach me, 'Liphalet; it ain't no trainin' o' mine that's perduced a child that laughs at old folks in the Lord's house."

"I ain't a-goin' to reproach you, Miss Hester, never you fear; I ain't a-goin' to say a word ag'in' yore trainin'; but I jest thought I'd ask you not to be too hard on Freddie. You know that Dan'l is kind o' tryin' sometimes even to the gravity of older people; an' childern will be childern; they ain't got the sense, nor—the deceit to keep a smooth face when they're a-laughin' all in their innards."

Miss Prime turned upon him in righteous wrath. "'Liphalet," she exclaimed, "I think it's enough fur this child to struggle ag'inst natural sin, without encouragin' him by makin' excuses fur him."

"It ain't my intention nor my desire to set a bad example before nobody, especially the young lambs of the flock, but I ain't a-goin' to blame Freddie fur doin' what many another of us wanted to do."

"'Deed an' double, that is fine talk fur you, 'Liphalet Hodges! you a trustee of the church, an' been a class-leader, a-holdin' up fur sich onregenerate carryin's-on."

"I ain't a-holdin' up fur nothin', Miss Hester, 'ceptin' nature an' the very couldn't-help-it-ness o' the thing altogether. I ain't a boy no more, by a good many years, but there's times when I've set under Dan'l Hastings's testimonies jest mortally cramped to laugh; an' ef it's so with a man, how will it be with a pore innercent child? I ain't a-excusin' natural sin in nobody. It wa'n't so much Freddie's natural sin as it was Dan'l's natural funniness." And there was something very like a chuckle in 'Liphalet's throat.

"'Liphalet, the devil's been puttin' fleas into yore ear, but I ain't a-goin' to let you argy me out o' none o' my settled convictions, although the Old Man's put plenty of argyment into yore head. That's his way o' capturin' a soul.—Walk on ahead, Frederick, an' don't be list'nin'. I'll 'tend to yore case later on."

"It's funny to me, Miss Hester, how it is that Christians know so much more about the devil's ways than they do the Lord's. They're allus a-sayin', 'the Lord moves in a mysterious way,' but they kin allus put their finger on the devil."

"'Liphalet Hodges, that's a slur!"

"I ain't a-meanin' it as no slur, Miss Hester; but most Christians do seem to have a powerful fondness for the devil. I notice that they're allus admirin' his work an' praisin' up his sharpness, an' they'd be monstrous disappointed ef he didn't git as many souls as they expect."

"Well, after all the years that I've been a-workin' in the church an' a-tryin' to let my light so shine before the world, I didn't think that you'd be the one to throw out hints about my Christianity. But we all have our burdens to bear, an' I'm a-goin' to bear mine the best I kin, an' do my dooty, whatever comes of it." And Miss Hester gave another sigh of injured rectitude.

"I see, Miss Hester, that you're jest bent an' bound not to see what I mean, so I might as well go home."

"I think my mind ain't givin' way yit, an' I believe that I do understand plain words; but I ain't a-bearin' you no grudge. You've spoke yore mind, an' it's all right."

"But I hope there ain't no hard feelin's, after all these years."

"Oh, 'Liphalet, it ain't a part of even my pore weak religion to bear hard feelin's towards no one, no matter how they treat me. I'm jest tryin' to bear my cross an' suffer fur the Lord's sake."

"But I hope I ain't a-givin' you no cross to bear. I 'ain't never doubted yore goodness or yore Christianity: I only thought that mebbe yore methods, yore methods——"

Miss Prime's lips were drawn into a line. She divided that line to say, "I know what the Scriptures say: 'If thy right hand offend thee'——"

"Hester, Hester!" he cried, stretching out his hands to her.

"Good-night, Brother Hodges. I must go in." She turned and left him standing at the gate with a hurt look in his face.

On going into the house, Miss Hester did not immediately 'tend to Fred, as she had promised. Instead, she left him and went into her own room, where she remained awhile. When she came out, her lips were no less set, but her eyes were red. It is hardly to be supposed that she had been indulging in that solace of woman's woes, a good cry.

"Take off yore jacket, Freddie," she said, calmly, taking down a switch from over the clothes-press. "I'm a-goin' to whip you; but, remember, I ain't a-punishin' you because I'm mad. It's fur the purpose of instruction. It's fur yore own good."

Fred received his dressing-down without a whimper. He was too angry to cry. This Miss Prime took as a mark of especial depravity. In fact, the boy had been unable to discover any difference between an instructive and a vindictive whipping. It was perfectly clear in his guardian's mind, but a cherry switch knows no such distinctions.

This incident only prepared Fred Brent for a further infraction of his guardian's rules the next day. One of Miss Prime's strictest orders had to do with fighting. Whatever the boys did to Fred, he was never to resent it. He must come to her, and she would go to the boy's mother. What an order to give a boy with muscles and fists and Nature strong within him! But, save for the telling, it had been obeyed, although it is hard to feel one's self an unwilling coward, a prig, and the laughing-stock of one's fellows. But when, on the day after his unjust punishment, and while still stung by the sense of wrong, one of the petty school-boy tyrants began to taunt him, he turned upon the young scamp and thrashed him soundly. His tormentor was not more hurt than surprised. Like most of his class, he was a tattler. The matter got to the teacher's ears, and that night Fred carried home an ominous-looking note. In his heart he believed that it meant another application of cherry switch, either instructive or vindictive, but he did not care. He had done the natural thing, and Nature rewards us for obeying her laws by making us happy or stoical. He had gone up in the estimation of his school-fellows, even the thrashed one, and he felt a reckless joy. He would welcome a whipping. It would bring him back memories of what he had given Billy Tompkins. "Wouldn't Miss Hester be surprised," he thought, "if I should laugh out while she is whipping me?" And he laughed at the very thought. He was full of pleasure at himself. He had satisfied the impulse within him for once, and it made him happy.

Miss Prime read the ominous note, and looked at her charge thoughtfully. Fred glanced expectantly in the direction of the top of the clothes-press. But she only said, "Go out an' git in yore kindlin', Freddie; git yore chores done, an' then come in to supper." Her voice was menacingly quiet. The boy had learned to read the signs of her face too well to think that he was to get off so easily as this. Evidently, he would "get it" after supper, or Miss Prime had some new, refined mode of punishment in store for him. But what was it? He cudgelled his brain in vain, as he finished his chores, and at table he could hardly eat for wondering. But he might have spared himself his pains, for he learned all too soon.

Immediately after supper he was bidden to put on his cap and come along. Miss Prime took him by the hand. "I'm a-goin' to take you," she said, "to beg Willie Tompkins's pardon fur the way you did him."

Did the woman know what it meant to the boy? She could not, or her heart would have turned against the cruelty. Fred was aghast. Beg his pardon! A whipping was a thousand times better: indeed, it would be a mercy. He began to protest, but was speedily silenced. The enforced silence, however, did not cool his anger. He had done what other boys did. He had acted in the only way that it seemed a boy could act under the circumstances, and he had expected to be punished as his fellows were; but this—this was awful. He clinched his hands until the nails dug into the palms. His face was as pale as death. He sweated with the consuming fire of impotent rage. He wished that he might run away somewhere where he could hide and tear things and swear. For a moment only he entertained the thought, and then a look into the determined face of the woman at his side drove the thought away. To his childish eyes, distorted by resentment, she was an implacable and relentless monster who would follow him with punishment anywhere he might go.

And now they were at Billy Tompkins's door. They had passed through, and he found himself saying mechanically the words which Miss Prime put into his mouth, while his tormentor grinned from beside his mother's chair. Then, after a few words between the women, in which he heard from Mrs. Tompkins the mysterious words, "Oh, I don't blame you, Miss Hester; I know that blood will tell," they passed out, and the grinning face of Billy Tompkins was the last thing that Fred saw. It followed him home. The hot tears fell from his eyes, but they did not quench the flames that were consuming him. There is nothing so terrible as the just anger of a child,—terrible in its very powerlessness. Polyphemus is a giant, though the mountain hold him down.

Next morning when Fred went to school, Billy Tompkins with a crowd of boys about was waiting to deride him; but at sight of his face they stopped. He walked straight up to his enemy and began striking him with all his might.

"She made me beg your pardon, did she?" he gasped between the blows; "well, you take that for it, and that." The boys had fallen back, and Billy was attempting to defend himself.

"Mebbe she'll make me do it again to-night. If she does, I'll give you some more o' this to-morrow, and every time I have to beg your pardon. Do you hear?"

The boys cheered lustily, and Billy Tompkins, completely whipped and ashamed, slunk away.

That night no report of the fight went home. Fred Brent held the master hand.

In life it is sometimes God and sometimes the devil that comes to the aid of oppressed humanity. From the means, it is often hard to tell whose handiwork are the results.

CHAPTER VII.

CYNICS and fools laugh at calf-love. Youth, which is wiser, treats it more seriously. When the boy begins to think of a girl, instead of girls, he displays the first budding signs of a real growing manhood. The first passion may be but the enthusiasm of discovery. Sometimes it is not. At times it dies, as fleeting enthusiasms do. Again it lives, and becomes a blessing, a curse, or a memory. Who shall say that the first half-sweet pang that strikes a boy's heart in the presence of the dear first girl is any less strong, intoxicating, and real to him than that which prompts him to take the full-grown woman to wife? With factitious sincerity we quote, "The boy is father to the man," and then refuse to believe that the qualities, emotions, and passions of the man are inherited from this same boy, are just the growth, the development, of what was embryonic in him.

Nothing is more serious, more pleasant, and more diverting withal, than a boy's brooding or exultation—one is the complement of the other—over his first girl. As, to a great extent, a man is moulded by the woman he marries, so to no less a degree is a boy's character turned and shaped by the girl he adores. Either he descends to her level, or she draws him up, unconsciously, perhaps, to her own plane. Girls are missionaries who convert boys. Boys are mostly heathens. When a boy has a girl, he remembers to put on his cuffs and collars, and he doesn't put his necktie into his pocket on the way to school.

In a boy's life, the having of a girl is the setting up of an ideal. It is the new element, the higher something which abashes the unabashed, and makes John, who caused Henry's nose to bleed, tremble when little Mary stamps her foot. It is like an atheist's finding God, the sudden recognition of a higher and purer force against which all that he knows is powerless. Why doesn't John bully Mary? It would be infinitely easier than his former exploit with Henry. But he doesn't. He blushes in her presence, brings her the best apples, out of which heretofore he has enjoined the boys not to "take a hog-bite," and, even though the parental garden grow none, comes by flowers for her in some way, queer boyish bouquets where dandelions press shoulders with spring-beauties, daffodils, and roses,—strange democracy of flowerdom. He feels older and stronger.

In Fred's case the object of adoration was no less a person than Elizabeth Simpson, the minister's daughter. From early childhood they had seen and known each other at school, and between them had sprung up a warm childish friendship, apparently because their ways home lay along the same route. In such companionship the years sped; but Fred was a diffident boy, and he was seventeen and Elizabeth near the same before he began to feel those promptings which made him blushing offer to carry her book for her as far as he went. She had hesitated, refused, and then assented, as is the manner of her sex and years. It had become a settled thing for them to walk home together, he bearing her burdens, and doing for her any other little service that occurred to his boyish sense of gallantry.

Without will of his own, and without returning the favor, he had

grown in the Rev. Mr. Simpson's esteem. This was due mostly to his guardian's excellent work. In spite of his rebellion, training and environment had brought him greatly under her control, and when she began to admonish him about his lost condition spiritually she had been able to awaken a sort of superstitious anxiety in the boy's breast. When Miss Prime perceived that this had been accomplished, she went forthwith to her pastor and unburdened her heart.

"Brother Simpson," said she, "I feel that the Lord has appointed me an instrument in His hands for bringin' a soul into the kingdom." The minister put the tips of his fingers together and sighed piously and encouragingly. "I have been laborin' with Freddie in the sperrit of Christian industry, an' I believe that I have finally brought him to a realizin' sense of his sinfulness."

"H'm-m," said the minister. "Bless the Lord for this evidence of the activity of His people. Go on, sister."

"Freddie has at last come to the conclusion that hell is his lot unless he flees unto the mountain and seeks salvation."

"Bless the Lord for this."

"Now, Brother Simpson, I have done my part as fur as the Lord has showed me, except to ask you to come and wrestle with that boy."

"Let not thy heart be troubled, Sister Prime, for I will come as you ask me, and I will wrestle with that boy as Jacob did of old with the angel."

"Oh, Brother Simpson, I knowed you'd come. I know jest how you feel about pore wanderin' souls, an' I'm so glad to have yore strong arm and yore wisdom a-helpin' me."

"I hope, my sister, that the Lord may smile upon my poor labors, and permit us to snatch this boy as a brand from eternal burning."

"We shall have to labor in the sperrit, Brother Simpson."

"Yes, and with the understanding of the truth in our hearts and minds."

"I'm shore I feel mighty uplifted by comin' here to-day. Do come up to dinner Sunday, dear Brother Simpson, after preachin'."

"I will come, Sister Prime, I will come. I know by experience the worth of the table which the Lord provides for you, and then at the same season I may be able to sound this sinful boy as to his spiritual state and to drop some seed into the ground which the Lord has mercifully prepared for our harvest. Good-by, sister, good-by. I shall not forget, Sunday after preaching."

In accordance with his promise, the Rev. Mr. Simpson began to labor with Fred, with the result of driving him into a condition of dogged revolt, which Miss Prime's persistence finally overcame. When revival time came round, as sure as death, it must come, Fred regularly went to the mourners' bench, mourned his few days until he had worked himself into the proper state, and then, somewhat too coldly, it is true, for his anxious guardian, "got religion."

On the visit next after this which Mr. Simpson paid to Miss Prime, he took occasion to say, "Ah, my sister, I am so glad that you pointed me to that lost lamb of the house of Israel, and I am thanking the Maker

every day that He blessed my efforts to bring the young lamb into the fold. Ah, there is more joy over the one lamb that is found than over the ninety and nine that went not astray!"

Mr. Simpson's parishioner acquiesced, but she had some doubts in her mind as to whose efforts the Lord had blessed. She felt a little bit selfish. She wanted to be the author of anything good that Fred became. But she did not argue with Mr. Simpson. There are some concessions which one must make to one's pastor.

From this time on the preacher was Fred's friend, and plied him with good advice in the usual friendly way; but the boy bore it well, for Elizabeth smiled on him, and what boy would not bear a father's tongue for a girl's eyes?

The girl was like her mother, dark and slender and gentle, and perhaps weak. She had none of her father's bigness or bumptiousness. Her eyes were large, and of a shade that was neither black nor brown. Her hair was very decidedly black. Her face was small, and round with the plumpness of youth, but one instinctively felt, in looking at it, that its lines might easily fall into thinness, even pitifulness, at the first touch of woman's sorrow. She was not, nor did she look to be, a strong girl. But her very weakness was the source of secret delight to the boy, for it made him feel her dependence on him. When they were together and some girlish fear made her cling to his arm, his heart swelled with pride and a something else that he could not understand and could not have described. Had any one told him that he was going through the half-sweet, half-painful, timid, but gallant first stages of love, he would have resented the imputation with blushes. His whole training would have made him think of such a thing with terror. He had learned never to speak of girls at home, for any reference to them by him was sure to bring forth from Miss Prime an instant and strong rebuke.

"Freddie," was her exclamation that gave his first unsuspecting remarks pause, "you're a-gittin' too fresh: you'd better be a-mindin' of yore studies, instead o' thinkin' about girls. Girls ain't a-goin' to make you pass yore examination, an', besides, you're a-gittin' mannish; fur boys o' yore age to be a-talkin' about girls is mannish, do you hear, sir? You're a-beginnin' to feel yore keepin' too strong. Don't let me hear no more sich talk out o' you."

There never was a manly boy in the world whom the word "mannish," when applied to him, did not crush. It is a horrid word, nasty and full of ugly import. Fred was subdued by it, and so kept silence about his female friends. Happy is the boy who dares at home to pour out his heart about the girls he knows and likes, and thrice unhappy he who through mistaken zeal on the part of misguided parents is compelled to keep his thoughts in his heart and brood upon his little aproned companions as upon a secret sin. Two things are thereby engendered, stealth and unhealth. If Fred escaped certain youthful pitfalls, it was because he was so repressed that he had learned to hide himself from himself, his thoughts from the mind that produced them.

He was a boy strong and full of blood. The very discipline that

had given a gloomy cast to his mind had given strength and fortitude to his body. He was austere, because austerity was all that he had ever known or had a chance of knowing; but too often austerity is but the dam that holds back the flood of potential passion. Not to know the power which rages behind the barricade is to leave the structure weak for a hapless day when, carrying all before it, the flood shall break its bonds and in its fury ruin fair field and smiling mead. It was well for Fred Brent that the awakening came when it did.

In the first days of June, when examinations are over, the annual exhibition done, and the graduating class has marched away proud in the possession of its diplomas, the minds of all concerned turn naturally towards the old institution, the school picnic. On this occasion parents join the teachers and pupils for a summer day's outing in the woods. Great are the preparations for the festal day, and great the rejoicings thereon. For these few brief hours old men and women lay aside their cares and their dignity and become boys and girls again. Those who have known sorrow—and who has not?—take to themselves a day of forgetfulness. Great baskets are loaded to overflowing with the viands dear to the picnicker's palate,—sandwiches whose corpulence would make their sickly brothers of the railway restaurant wither with envy, pies and pickles, cheese and crackers, cakes and jams galore. Old horses that, save for this day, know only the market-cart or the Sunday chaise, are hitched up to bear out the merry loads. Old wagons, whose wheels have known no other decoration than the mud and clay of rutty roads, are festooned gayly with cedar wreaths, oak leaves, or the gaudy tissue-paper rosettes, and creak joyfully on their mission of lightness and mirth. On foot, by horse, in wagon or cart, the crowds seek some neighboring grove, and there the day is given over to laughter, mirth, and song. The children roll and tumble on the sward in the intoxication of "swing-turn" and "ring-around-a-rosy." The young women, with many blushes and shy glances, steal off to quiet nooks with their imploring swains. Some of the elders, anxious to prove that they have not yet lost all their youth and agility, indulge, rather awkwardly perhaps, in the exhausting amusement of the jumping-rope. A few of the more staid walk apart in conversation with some favorite pastor who does not decline to take part in the innocent pleasures and crack ponderous jokes for the edification of his followers. Perhaps some of the more daring are engaged in one of the numerous singing plays, such as "Oh, la, Miss Brown," or "Swing Candy, Two and Two," but these are generally frowned upon: they are too much like dancing, and time has been when some too adventurous church-member has been "churched" for engaging in one.

In such a merrymaking was the community which surrounded the high school at Dexter engaged when the incident occurred which opened Fred's eyes to his own state. Both he and Elizabeth had been in the prize ranks that year, and their friends had turned out in full and made much of them. Even Eliphalet Hodges was there, with old Bess festooned as gayly as the other horses, and both Miss Prime and Mr. Simpson were in evidence. The afternoon of the day was somewhat advanced, the dinner had been long over, and the weariness of

the people had cast something of a quietus over the hilarity of their sports. They were sitting about in groups, chatting and laughing, while the tireless children were scurrying about in games of "tag," "catcher," and "hide-and-seek."

The grove where the festivities were being held was on a hill-side which sloped gently to the bank of a small, narrow stream, usually dry in summer; but now, still feeling the force of the spring freshets, and swollen by the rain of the day before, it was rushing along at a rapid rate. A fence divided the picnic-ground proper from the sharper slope of the rivulet's bank. This fence the young people had been warned not to pass, and so no danger was apprehended on account of the stream's overflowing condition. But the youngsters at Dexter were no more obedient than others of their age elsewhere. So when a scream arose from several childish voices at the lower part of the hill, everybody knew that some child had been disobeying, and, pell-mell, the picnickers rushed in the direction of the branch.

When they reached the nearest point from which they could see the stream, a terrifying sight met their eyes. A girl was struggling in the shallow but swift water. She had evidently stepped on the sloping bank and fallen in. Her young companions were running alongside the rivulet, stretching out their hands helplessly to her, but the current was too strong, and, try as she would, she could not keep her feet. A cry of grief and despair went up from the girls on the bank, as she made one final effort and then fell and was carried down by the current.

Men were leaping the fence now, but a boy who had seen the whole thing from a neighboring hillock was before them. Fred Brent came leaping down the hill like a young gazelle. He had seen who the unfortunate girl was,—Elizabeth,—and he had but one desire in his heart, to save her. He reached the bank twenty yards ahead of any one else, and plunged into the water just in front of her, for she was catching and slipping, clinging and losing hold, but floating surely to her death. He struggled up stream, reached and caught her by the dress. The water tugged at him and tried to throw him over, but he stemmed it, and, lifting her up in his arms, fought his way manfully to the bank. Up this he faltered, slipping and sliding in the wet clay, and weak with his struggle against the strong current. But his face was burning and his blood tingling, as he held the girl close to him till he gave her unconscious form into her father's arms.

For the moment all was confusion, as was natural when a preacher's daughter was so nearly drowned. The crowd clustered around and gave much advice and some restoratives. Some unregenerate, with many apologies and explanations concerning his possession, produced a flask, and part of the whiskey was forced down the girl's throat, while her hands and face and feet were chafed. She opened her eyes at last, and a fervent "Thank God!" broke from her father's lips and called forth a shower of Amens.

As soon as Fred saw that Elizabeth was safe, he struck away for home, unobserved, and without waiting to hear what the crowd were saying. He heard people calling his name kindly and admiringly, but

it only gave wings to the feet that took him away from them. If he had thrown the girl in instead of bringing her out, he could not have fled more swiftly or determinedly away from the eyes of people. Tired and footsore, drenched to the skin and chilled through, he finally reached home. He was trembling, he was crying, but he did not know it, and had he known, he could not have told why. He did not change his clothes, but crouched down in a corner and hid his face in his hands. He dreaded seeing any one or hearing any person speak his name. He felt painfully conscious of a new self, which he thought must be apparent to other eyes.

The accident of the afternoon had cast a gloom over the merry-makings, and, the picnic breaking up abruptly, sent the people scurrying home, so that Miss Prime was at the house not far behind her charge.

"Freddie," she called to him as she entered the house, "Freddie, where air you?" And then she found him. She led him out of the corner and looked him over with a scrutinizing eye. "Freddie Brent," she said, solemnly, "you've jest ruined yore suit." He was glad. He wanted to be scolded. "But," she went on, "I don't care ef you have." And here she broke down. "You're a-goin' to have another one, fur you're a right smart boy, that's all I've got to say." For a moment he wanted to lay his head on her breast and give vent to the sob which was choking him. But he had been taught neither tenderness nor confidence, so he choked back the sob, though his throat felt dry and hot and strained. He stood silent and embarrassed until Miss Prime recovered herself and continued: "But la, child, you'll take yore death o' cold. Git out o' them wet things an' git into bed, while I make you some hot tea. Fur the life o' me, I never did see sich carryin's-on."

The boy was not sorry to obey. He was glad to be alone. He drank the warm tea and tried to go to sleep, but he could not. His mind was on fire. His heart seemed as if it would burst from his bosom. Something new had come to him. He began to understand, and blushed because he did understand. It was less discovery than revelation. His forehead was hot. His temples were throbbing. It was well that Miss Prime did not discover it: she would have given him horehound to cure—thought!

From the moment that the boy held the form of the girl to his heart he was changed, and she was changed to him. They could never be the same to each other again. Manhood had come to him in a single instant, and he saw in her womanhood. He began for the first time to really know himself, and it frightened him and made him ashamed.

He drew the covers over his head and lay awake, startled, surprised at what he knew himself and mankind to be.

To Fred Brent the awakening had come; early, if we would be prudish,—not too early, if we would be truthful.

CHAPTER VIII.

IF Fred Brent had needed anything to increase his consciousness of the new feeling that had come to him, he could not have done better to get it than by going to see Eliphalet Hodges next day. His war of thought had gone on all night, and when he rose in the morning he thought that he looked guilty, and he was afraid that Miss Prime would notice it and read his secret. He wanted rest. He wanted to be secure from any one who would even suspect what was in his heart. But he wanted to see and to talk to some one. Who better, then, than his old friend?

So he finished his morning's chores and slipped away. He would not pass by Elizabeth's house, but went by alleys and lanes until he reached his destination. The house looked rather silent and deserted, and Mr. Hodges's old assistant did not seem to be working in the garden as usual. But after some search the boy found his old friend smoking upon the back porch. There was a cloud upon the usually bright features, and the old man took his pipe from his mouth with a disconsolate sigh as the boy came in sight.

"I'm mighty glad you've come, Freddie," said he, in a sad voice. "I've been a-wantin' to talk to you all the mornin'. Set down on the side o' the porch, or git a chair out o' the house, ef you'd ruther."

The boy sat down, wondering what could be the matter with his friend, and what he could have to say to him. Surely it must be something serious, for the whole tone and manner of his companion indicated something of import. The next remark startled him into sudden suspicion.

"There's lots o' things made me think o' lots of other things in the last couple o' days. You've grown up kind o' quick like, Freddie, so that a body 'ain't hardly noticed it, but that ain't no matter. You're up or purty nigh it, an' you can understand and appreciate lots o' the things that you used to couldn't."

Fred sat still, with mystery and embarrassment written on his face. He wanted to hear more, but he was almost afraid to listen further.

"I 'ain't watched you so close, mebbe, as I'd ought to 'a' done, but when I seen you yistiddy evenin' holdin' that little girl in yore arms I said to myself, I said, 'Liphalet Hodges, Freddie ain't a child no more; he's grewed up.' The boy's face was scarlet. Now he was sure that the thoughts of his heart had been surprised, and that this best of friends thought of him as "fresh," "mannish," or even wicked. He could not bear the thought of it; again the tears rose in his eyes, usually so free from such evidences of weakness. But the old man went on slowly in a low, half-reminiscent tone, without looking at his auditor to see what effect his words had had. "Well, that was one of the things that set me thinkin'; an' then there was another." He cleared his throat and pulled hard at his pipe; something made him blink,—dust, or smoke, or tears, perhaps. "Freddie," he half sobbed out, "old Bess is dead. Pore old Bess died last night o' colic. I'm afeared the drive to the picnic was too much fur her."

"Old Bess dead!" cried the boy, grieved and at the same time relieved. "Who would have thought it? Poor old girl! It seems like losing one of the family."

"She was one of the family," said the old man, brokenly. "She was more faithful than most human beings." The two stood sadly musing, the boy as sad as the man. "Old Bess" was the horse that had taken him for his first ride, that winter morning years before, when the heart of the child was as cold as the day. Eliphalet Hodges had warmed the little heart, and, in the years that followed, man, child, and horse had grown nearer to each other in a queer but sympathetic companionship.

Then, as if recalling his mind from painful reflections, the elder man spoke again. "But it ain't no use a-worryin' over what can't be helped. We was both fond o' old Bess, an' I know you feel as bad about losin' her as I do. But I'm a-goin' to give her a decent burial, sich as a Christian ought to have; fur, while the old mare wasn't no perfessor, she lived the life, an' that's more'n most perfessors do. Yes, sir, I'm a-goin' to have her buried: no glue-man fur me. I reckon you're a-wantin' to know how old Bess dyin' an' yore a-savin' 'Lizabeth could run into each other in my mind; but they did. Fur, as I see you standin' there a-holdin' the little girl, it come to me sudden like, 'Freddie's grown now, an' he'll be havin' a girl of his own purty soon, ef he 'ain't got one now. Mebbe it'll be 'Lizabeth.'" The old man paused for a moment: his eyes rested on the boy's fiery face. "Tut, tut," he resumed, "you ain't ashamed, air you? Well, what air you a-gittin' so red fur? Havin' a girl ain't nothin' to be ashamed of, or skereed about neither. Most people have girls one time or another, an' I don't know of nothin' that'll make a boy or a young man go straighter than to know that his girl's eyes air upon him. Don't be ashamed at all."

Fred still blushed, but he felt better, and his face lightened over the kindly words.

"I didn't finish tellin' you, though, what I started on. I got to thinkin' yesterday about my young days, when I had a girl, an' how I used to ride back an' forth on the pore old horse right into this town to see her; an' as I drove home from the picnic I talked to the old nag about it, an' she whisked her tail an' laid back her ears, jest like she remembered it all. It was on old Bess that I rode away from my girl's house after her first 'no' to me, an' it seemed then that the animal sympathized with me, fur she drooped along an' held down her head jest like I was a-doin'. Many a time after that we rode away that way together, fur the girl was set in her ways, an' though she confessed to a hankerin' fur me, she wanted to be independent. I think her father put the idee into her head, fur he was a hard man, an' she was his all, his wife bein' dead. After a while we stopped talkin' about the matter, an' I jest went an' come as a friend. I only popped the question once more, an' that was when her father died an' she was left all alone.

"It was a summer day, warm an' cheerful like this, only it was evenin', an' we was a-settin' out on her front garden walk. She was

a-knittin', an' I was a-whippin' the groun' with a switch that I had brought along to touch Bess up with now an' then. I had hitched her out front, an' she kep' a-turnin' her eyes over the fence as ef she was as anxious as I was, an' that was mighty anxious. Fin'ly I got the question out, an' the girl went all red in a minute; she had been jest a purty pink before. Her knittin' fell in her lap. Fust she started to answer, then she stopped an' her eyes filled up. I seen she was a-weak'nin', so I thought I'd push the matter. 'Come,' says I, gentle like, an' edgin' near up to her, 'give me my answer. I been waitin' a long time fur a yes.' With that she grabbed knittin', apron, an' all, an' put 'em to her eyes an' rushed into the house. I knowed she'd gone in to have a good cry an' settle her nerves, fur that's the way all women-folks does: so I knowed it was no use to bother her until it was done. So I walks out to the fence, an', throwin' an arm over old Bess's back, I told her all about it, jest as I'm a-tellin' you, she a-lookin' at me with her big meltin' eyes an' whinnyin' soft like.

"After a little while the girl come out. She was herself ag'in, but there was a look in her face that turned my heart stone-cold. Her voice sounded kind o' sharp as she said, 'Liphalet, I've been a-thinkin' over what you said. I'm only a woman, an' I come purty near bein' a weak one; but I'm all right now. I don't mind tellin' you that ef I was ever goin' to marry, you'd be my choice, but I ain't a-goin' to have my father's sperrit a-thinkin' that I took advantage of his death to marry you. Good-by, 'Liphalet.' She held out her hand to me, an' I took it. 'Come an' see me sometimes,' she said. I couldn't answer, so I went out and got on old Bess an' we jogged away. It was an awful disappointment, but I thought I would wait an' let my girl come aroun', fur sometimes they do,—in fact mostly; but she has never give me a sign to make me think that she has. That was twenty years ago, an' I've been waitin' faithful ever sence. But it seems like she was different from most women, an' 'specially good on holdin' out. People that was babies then have growed up an' married. An' now the old companion that has been with me through all this waitin' has left me. I know what it means. It means that I'm old, that years have been wasted, that chances have been lost. But you have taught me my lesson, Bess. Dear old Bess, even in yore last hours you did me a service, an' you, Freddie, you have given me the stren'th that I had twenty years ago, an' I'm a-goin' to try to save what remains of my life." He was greatly agitated. He rose and grasped the boy's arm. "Come, Freddie," he said; "come on. I'm a-goin' to ask Miss Prime ag'in to be my wife."

"Miss Prime!" exclaimed Fred, aghast.

"Miss Prime was my sweetheart, Freddie, thirty years ago, jest like 'Lizabeth is yor'n now. Come along."

The two set out, Hodges stepping with impatient alacrity, and the boy too astounded to speak.

It was a beautiful morning at the end of June. The sense of spring's reviving influence had not yet given way to the full languor and sensuousness of summer. The wind was soft and warm and fragrant. The air was full of the song of birds and the low droning

of early bees. The river that flowed between the green hills and down through Dexter was like a pane of wrinkled glass, letting light and joy even into the regions below. Over the streets and meadows and hills lay a half haze, like a veil over the too dazzling beauty of an Eastern princess. The hum of business,—for in the passing years Dexter had grown busy,—the roar of traffic in the streets, all melted into a confused and intoxicating murmur as the pedestrians passed into the residence portion of the town to the cottage where Miss Prime still lived. The garden was as prim as ever, the walks as straight and well kept. The inevitable white curtains were fluttering freshly from the window, over which a huge matrimony vine drooped lazily and rung its pink and white bells to invite the passing bees.

Eliphalet paused at the gate and heaved a deep sigh. So much depended upon the issue of his present visit. The stream of his life had been flowing so smoothly before. Now if its tranquillity were disturbed it never could be stilled again. Did he dare to risk so much upon so hazardous a chance? Were it not better to go back home, back to his old habits and his old ease, without knowing his fate? That would at least leave him the pleasure of speculating. He might delude himself with the hope that some day—— He faltered. His hand was on the gate, but his face was turned back towards the way he had come. Should he enter, or should he go back? Fate decided for him, for at this juncture the door opened, and Miss Hester appeared in the doorway and called out, "Do come in, 'Liphalet. What air you a-standin' out there so long a-studyin' about, fur all the world like a bashful boy?"

The shot told. He was a bashful boy again, going fearfully, tremblingly, lovingly, to see the girl of his heart; but there was no old Bess to whinny encouragement to him from over the little fence. If he blushed, even the scrutinizing eyes of Miss Prime did not see it, for the bronze laid on his face by summers and winters of exposure; but he felt the hot blood rush up to his face and neck, and the perspiration breaking out on his brow. He paused long enough to mop his face, and then, saying to Fred, in a low tone, "You stay in the garden, my boy, until it's all over," he opened the gate and entered in the manner of one who leads a forlorn hope through forest aisles where an ambush is suspected. The door closed behind him. Interested, excited, wondering and fearing, doubting and hoping, Fred remained in the garden. There were but two thoughts in his head, and they were so new and large that his poor boy's cranium had room for no more. They ran in this wise: "Miss Prime is Uncle 'Liphalet's girl, and Elizabeth is mine."

Within, Miss Prime was talking on in her usual decided fashion, while the man sat upon the edge of his chair and wondered how he could break in upon the stream of her talk and say what was in his heart. At last the lady exclaimed, "I do declare, 'Liphalet, what kin be the matter with you? You 'ain't said ten words sence you've been a-settin' there. I hope you 'ain't talked yoreself entirely out with Fred. It does beat all how you an' that boy seem to grow thicker an' thicker every day. One 'ud think fur all the world that you told him

all yore secrets, an' was afeared he'd tell 'em, by the way you stick by him; an' he's jest as bad about you. It's amazin'."

"Freddie's a wonderful good boy, an' he's smart, too. They ain't none of 'em a-goin' to throw dust in his eyes in the race of life."

"I'm shore I tried to do my dooty by him the very best I could, an' ef he does amount to anything in this world it'll be through hard labor an' mighty careful watchin'." Miss Hester gave a sigh that was meant to be full of solemnity, but that positively reeked with self-satisfaction.

"But as you say, 'Liphalet,' she went on, "Fred ain't the worst boy in the world, nor the dumbest neither, ef I do say it myself. I ain't a-sayin', mind you, that he's anything so great or wonderful; but I've got to thinkin' that there's somethin' in him besides original sin, an' I should feel that the Lord had been mighty favorin' to me ef I could manage to draw it out. The fact of it is, 'Liphalet, I've took a notion in my head about Fred, an' I'm a-goin' to tell you what it is. I've decided to make a preacher out o' him."

"H'm—ah—well, Miss Hester, don't you think you'd better let the Lord do that?"

"Nonsense, 'Liphalet! you 'ain't got no insight at all. I believe in people a-doin' their part an' not a-shovin' everything off on the Lord. The shiftless don't want nothin' better than to leave the Lord to take care o' things, an' then fold their arms an' set down an' let things go to the devil. Remember, Brother Hodges, I don't mean that in a perfane way. But then, because God made the sunlight an' the rain, it ain't no sign that we shouldn't prune the vine."

Miss Hester's face had flushed up with the animation of her talk, and her eyes were sparkling with excitement.

Eliphalet looked at her, and his heart leaped. He felt that the time had come to speak.

"Miss Hester," he began, and the hat in his hand went round and round nervously.

"'Liphalet, fur goodness' sake do lay yore hat on the table. You'll ruin the band of it, an' you make me as nervous as a cat."

He felt a little dampened after this, but he laid down the offending hat and began again. "I've been thinkin' some myself, Miss Hester, an' it's been about you."

"About me? La, 'Liphalet, what have you been a-thinkin' now?" The "now" sounded as if his thoughts were usually rather irresponsible.

"It was about you an'—an'—old Bess."

"About me an' old Bess! Bless my soul, man, will you stop beatin' about the bush an' tell me what on airth I've got to do with yore horse?"

"Old Bess is dead, Miss Hester; died last night o' colic."

"Well, I thought there was somethin' the matter with you. I'm mighty sorry to hear about the poor old creatur; but she'd served you a long while."

"That's jest what set me a-thinkin': she has served me a long while, an' now she's dead. Do you know what that means, Miss

Hester? It means that we're a-gittin' old, you an' me. Do you know when I got old Bess? It was nigh thirty years ago: I used to ride her up to this door an' tie her to that tree out there: it was a saplin' then. An' now she's dead."

The man's voice trembled, and his listener was strangely silent.

"You know on what errands the old horse used to bring me," he went on, "but it wasn't to be,—then. Hester," he rose, went over to her, and looked down into her half-averted face, which went red and pale by turns,—“Hester, 'ain't we wasted time enough?"

There was a long pause before she lifted her face: he stood watching her with the light of a great eagerness in his eyes. At last she spoke. There was a catch in her voice; it was softer than usual.

"'Liphalet," she began, "I'm right glad you remember those days. I 'ain't never furgot 'em myself. It's true you've been a good loyal friend to me, an' I thank you fur it, but, after all these years——"

He broke in upon her with something like youthful impetuosity. "After all these years," he exclaimed, "an' endurin' love ought to be rewarded. Hester, I ain't a-goin' to take 'no' fur an answer. I've got lots o' years o' life in me yet,—we both have,—an' I ain't a-goin' on with an empty home an' an empty heart no longer."

"'Liphalet, you ain't a young man no more, an' I ain't a young woman, an' the Lord——"

"I don't care ef I ain't, an' I don't believe in shovin' everything off on the Lord."

"'Liphalet!" It was a reproach.

"Hester!" This was love. He put his arm around her and kissed her. "You're a-goin' to say yes, ain't you? You ain't a-goin' to send me away miserable? You're a-dyin' to say yes, but you're a-tryin' to force yoreself not to. Don't." He lifted her face as a young lover might, and looked down into her eyes. "Is it yes?"

"Well, 'Liphalet, it 'pears like you're jest so pesterin' that I've got to say yes. Yes, then." And she returned the quiet but jubilant kiss that he laid upon her lips.

"After all these years," he said. "Sorrow may last fur a night, but joy cometh in the mornin'. It was a long night, but, thank the Lord, mornin's broke." Then, rising, he went to the door and called joyously, "Freddie, come on in: it's all over."

"'Liphalet, did that boy know what you was a-goin' to say?"

"Yes, o' course he did."

"Oh, my! oh, my! Well, I've got a good mind to take it all back. Oh, my!" And when Fred came in, for the first time in her life Miss Prime was abashed and confused in his presence.

But Eliphalet had no thought of shame. He took her by the hand and said, "Freddie, Miss Hester's consented at last: after thirty years, she's a-goin' to marry me."

But Miss Hester broke in, "'Liphalet, don't be a-puttin' notions in that boy's head. You go 'way, Fred, right away."

Fred went out, but he felt bolder. He went past Elizabeth's house whistling. He didn't care. He wondered if he would have to wait thirty years for her. He hoped not.

CHAPTER IX.

So great has been our absorption in the careers of Fred Brent, Miss Prime, and Eliphalet Hodges that we have sadly neglected some of the characters whose acquaintance we made at the beginning of our story. But Nature and Time have been kinder,—or more cruel, if you will. They have neither passed over nor neglected them. They have combined with trouble and hard work to kill one of Fred's earliest friends. Melissa Davis is no more, and the oldest girl, Sophy, supplements her day's work of saleswoman in a dry-goods store by getting supper in the evening and making the younger Davises step around. Mrs. Warren, the sometime friend of Margaret Brent and enemy of Miss Prime, has moved farther out, into the suburbs, for Dexter has suburbs now, and boasts electric cars and amusement parks. Time has done much for the town. Its streets are paved, and the mean street that bore the tumble-down Brent cottage and its fellows has been built up and grown respectable. It and the street where Miss Prime's cottage frowned down have settled away into a quiet residential portion of the town, while around to the east, south, and west, and on both sides of the little river that divides the city, roars and surges the traffic of a characteristic middle-West town. Half-way up the hill, where the few aristocrats of the place formerly lived in almost royal luxuriance and seclusion, a busy sewing-machine factory has forced its way, and with its numerous chimneys and stacks literally smoked the occupants out; at their very gates it sits like the commander of a besieging army, and about it cluster the cottages of the workmen, in military regularity. Little and neat and trim, they flock there like the commander's obedient host, and such they are, for the sight of them offends the eyes of wealth. So what with the smoke, and what with the proximity of the poorer classes, wealth capitulates, evacuates, and with robes discreetly held aside passes by to another quarter, and a new district is born where poverty dare not penetrate. Seated on a hill, where, as is their inclination, they may look down, literally and figuratively, upon the hurrying town, they are complacent again, and the new-comers to the town, the new-rich magnates and the half-rich strugglers who would be counted on the higher level, move up and swell their numbers at Dexter View.

Amid all this change, two alone of those we know remain unaltered and unalterable, true to their traditions. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Martin, the two ancient gossips, still live side by side, spying and commenting on all that falls within their ken, much as they did on that day when Eliphalet Hodges took Fred Brent for his first drive behind old Bess. Their windows still open out in the same old way, whence they can watch the happenings of the street. If there has been any change in them at all, it is that they have grown more absorbed and more keen in following and dissecting their neighbors' affairs.

It is to these two worthies, then, that we wish to reintroduce the reader on an early autumn evening some three months after the events narrated in the last chapter.

Mrs. Martin went to her back fence, which was the nearest point

of communication between her and her neighbor. "Mis' Smith," she called, and her confederate came hurrying to the door, thimble on and a bit of sewing clutched precariously in her apron, just as she had caught it up when the significant call brought her to the back door.

"Oh, you're busy as usual, I see," said Mrs. Martin.

"It ain't nothin' partic'ler, only a bit o' bastin' that I was doin'."

"You ain't a-workin' on the machine, then, so you might bring your sewin' over and take a cup o' tea with me."

"La! now that's so kind o' you, Mis' Martin. I was jest thinkin' how good a cup o' tea would taste, but I didn't want to stop to make it. I'll be over in a minute, jest as soon as I see if my front door is locked." And she disappeared within the house, while Mrs. Martin returned to her own sitting-room.

The invited knew very well what the invitation to tea meant. She knew that some fresh piece of news was to be related and discussed. The beverage of which she was invited to partake was but a pretext, but neither the one nor the other admitted as much. Each understood perfectly, as by a tacit agreement, and each tried to deceive herself and the other as to motives and objects.

There is some subtle tie between tea-drinking and gossip. It is over their dainty cups that women dissect us men and damn their sisters. Some of the quality of the lemon they take in their tea gets into their tongues. Tea is to talk what dew is to a plant, a gentle nourishing influence, which gives to its product much of its own quality. There are two acids in the tea which cultured women take. There is only one in the beverage brewed by commonplace people. But that is enough.

Mrs. Martin had taken her tray into the sitting-room, where a slight fire was burning in the prim "parlor cook," on which the hot water was striving to keep its quality when Mrs. Smith came in.

"La, Mis' Martin, you do manage to have everything so cosy. I'm shore a little fire in a settin'-room don't feel bad these days."

"I jest thought I'd have to have a fire," replied Mrs. Martin, "fur I was feelin' right down chilly, though goodness knows a person does burn enough coal in winter, without throwin' it away in these early fall days."

"Well, the Lord's put it here fur our comfort, an' I think we're a-doin' His will when we make use o' the comfort He gives us."

"Ah, but, Mis' Smith, there's too many people that goes about the world thinkin' that they know jest what the Lord's will is; but I have my doubts about 'em, though, mind you, I ain't a-mentionin' no names: 'no name, no blame.'" Mrs. Martin pressed her lips and shook her head, a combination of gestures that was eloquent with meaning. It was too much for her companion. Her curiosity got the better of her caution.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed. "What is it now?"

"Oh, nothin' of any consequence at all. It ain't fur me to be a-judgin' my neighbors or a-talkin' about 'em. I jest thought I'd have you over to tea, you're sich good company."

Mrs. Smith was so impatient that she had forgotten her sewing and

it lay neglected in her lap, but in no other way did she again betray her anxiety. She knew that there was something new to be told and that it would be told all in good time. But when gossip has become a fine art it must be conducted with dignity and precision.

"Let me see, I believe you take two lumps o' sugar an' no milk." Mrs. Martin knew perfectly what her friend took. "I don't know how this tea is. I got it from the new grocery over at the corner." She tasted it deliberately. "It might 'a' drawed a little more." Slowly she stirred it round and round, and then, as if she had drawn the truth from the depths of her cup, she observed, "This is a queer world, Mis' Smith."

Mrs. Smith sighed a sigh that was appreciative and questioning at once. "It is indeed," she echoed; "I'm always a-sayin' to myself what a mighty cur'us world this is."

"Have you ever got any tea from that new grocery-man?" asked her companion, with tantalizing irrelevance.

"No: I hain't never even been in there."

"Well, this here's middlin' good: don't you think so?"

"Oh, it's more than middlin', it's downright good. I think I must go into that grocery some time, myself."

"I was in there to-day, and met Mis' Murphy: she says there's great goin'-ons up at Miss Prime's—I never shall be able to call her Mis' Hodges."

"You don't tell me! She an' Brother 'Liphalet 'ain't had a fallin' out already, have they? Though what more could you expect?"

"Oh, no, indeed. It ain't no fallin' out, nothin' o' the kind."

"Well, what then? What has Miss Hester—I mean Mis' Hodges been doin' now? Where will that woman stop? What's she done?"

"Well, you see,—do have another cup of tea, an' help yoreself to that bread an' butter,—you see, Freddie Brent has finished at the high school, an' they've been wonderin' what to make him."

"Well, what air they a-goin' to make him? His father was a good stone-mason, when he was anything."

"Humph! you don't suppose Miss Hester's been sendin' a boy to school to learn Latin and Greek an' algebray an' sich, to be a stone-mason, do you? Huh uh. Said I to myself, as soon as I see her sendin' him from the common school to high school, says I, 'She's got big notions in her head.' Oh, no; the father's trade was not good enough for her boy: so thinks Mis' 'Liphalet Hodges."

"Well, what on airth is she goin' to make out of him, then?"

"Please pass me that sugar: thank you. You know Mr. Daniels offered him a place as clerk in the same store where Sophy Davis is. It was mighty kind o' Mr. Daniels, I think, to offer him the job."

"Well, didn't he take it?"

"Well, partly he did an' partly he didn't, ef you can understand that."

"Sally Martin, what do you mean? A body has to fairly pick a thing out o' you."

"I mean that she told Mr. Daniels he might work for him half of every day."

"Half a day! An' what's he goin' to do the other half?"

"He's a-goin' to the Bible Seminary the other half-day. She's a-goin' to make a preacher out o' him."

Mrs. Martin had slowly and tortuously worked up to her climax, and she shot forth the last sentence with a jubilant ring. She had well calculated its effects. Sitting back in her chair, she supped her tea complacently as she contemplated her companion's astonishment. Mrs. Smith had completely collapsed into her seat, folded her arms, and closed her eyes. "Laws a massy!" she exclaimed. "What next? Old Tom, drunken Tom, swearin' an' ravin' Tom Brent's boy a preacher!" Then suddenly she opened her eyes and sat up very erect and alert as she broke forth, "Sally Martin, what air you a-tellin' me? It ain't possible. It's ag'in' nature. A panther's cub ain't a-goin' to be a lamb. It's downright wicked, that's what I say."

"An' so says I to Mis' Murphy, them same identical words; says I, 'Mis' Murphy, it's downright wicked. It's a-shamin' of the Lord's holy callin' o' the ministry.'"

"An' does the young scamp pertend to 'a' had a call?"

"No, indeed: he was mighty opposed to it, and so was her husband; but that woman was so sot she wouldn't agree to nothin' else. He don't pertend to 'a' heard no call, 'ceptin' Miss Hester's, an' that was a command. I know it's all true, for Mis' Murphy, while she wasn't jest a-listenin', lives next door and heard it all."

And so the two women fell to discussing the question, as they had heard it, pro and con. It was all true, as the women had it, that Miss Hester had put into execution her half-expressed determination to make a preacher of Fred. He had heard nothing of it until the day when he rushed in elated over the kindly offer of a place in Mr. Daniels's store. Then his guardian had firmly told him of her plan, and there was a scene.

"You kin jest tell Mr. Daniels that you kin work for him half a day every day, an' that you're a-goin' to put in the rest of your time at the Bible Seminary. I've made all the arrangements."

"But I don't want to be a preacher," the boy had retorted, with some heat. "I'd a good deal rather learn business, and some day start out for myself."

"It ain't what some of us wants to do in this life; it's what the Lord appoints us to; an' it's wicked fur you to rebel."

"I don't know how you can know so much what the Lord means for me to do. I should think He would give His messages to those who are to do the work."

"That's right, Freddie Brent, sass me, sass me. That's what I've struggled all the best days of my life to raise you fur."

"I'm not sassin' you, but——"

"Don't you think, Hester," broke in her husband, "that mebbe there's some truth in what Freddie says? Don't you think the Lord kind o' whispers what He wants people to do in their own ears? Mebbe it wasn't never intended fur Freddie to be a preacher: there's other ways o' doin' good besides a-talkin' from the pulpit."

"I'd be bound fur you, 'Liphalet: it's a shame, you a-goin' ag'in'

me, after all I've done to make Freddie material fit for the Lord's use. Jest think what you'll have to answer fur, a-helpin' this unruly boy to shirk his dooty."

"I ain't a-goin' ag'in' you, Hester. You're my wife, an' I 'low 'at your jedgment's purty sound on most things. I ain't a-goin' ag'in' you at all, but—but—I was jest a-wonderin'."

The old man brought out the last words slowly, meditatively. He was "jest a-wonderin'." His wife, though, never wondered.

"Mind you," she went on, "I say to you, Freddie, and to your uncle 'Liphalet too, if he upholds you, that it ain't me you're a-rebellin' against. It's yore dooty an' the will o' God that you're a-fightin'. It's easy enough to rebel against man; but do you know what you're a-doin' when you set yourself up against the Almighty? Do you want to do that?"

"Yes," came the boy's answer like a flash. He was stung and irritated into revolt, and a torrent of words poured from his lips unrestrained. "I'm tired of doing right. I'm tired of being good. I'm tired of obeying God——"

"Freddie!" But over the dam the water was flowing with irresistible force. The horror of his guardian's face and the terrible reproach in her voice could not check the boy.

"Everything," he continued, "that I have ever wanted to do since I can remember has been bad, or against my duty, or displeasing to God. Why does He frown on everything I want to do? Why do we always have to be killing our wishes on account of duty? I don't believe it. I hate duty. I hate obedience. I hate everything, and I won't obey——"

"Freddie, be keerful: don't say anything that'll hurt after your mad spell's over. Don't blaspheme the Lord A'mighty."

'Liphalet Hodges's voice was cool and tender and persuasive. He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, while his wife sat there motionless, white and rigid with horror.

The old man's words and his gentle touch had a wonderful effect on the boy; they checked his impassioned outburst; but his pent-up heart was too full. He burst into tears and rushed headlong from the house.

For a time he walked aimlessly on, his mind in a tumult of rage. Then he began to come to himself. He saw the people as they passed him. He had eyes again for the street, and he wondered where he was going. He felt an overwhelming desire to talk to some one and to get sympathy, consolation, and perhaps support. But whither should he turn? If 'Liphalet Hodges had been at the old house, his steps would naturally have bent in that direction; but this refuge was no longer his. Then his mind began going over the people whom he knew, and no name so stuck in his fancy as that of Elizabeth. It was a hard struggle. He was bashful. Any other time he would not have done it, but now his great need created in him an intense desperation that made him bold. He turned and retraced his steps towards the Simpson house.

Elizabeth was leaning over the gate. The autumn evening was

cool: she had a thin shawl about her shoulders. She was humming a song as Fred came up. His own agitation made her seem irritatingly calm. She opened the gate and made room for him at her side.

"You seem dreadfully warm," she said, "and here I was getting ready to go in because it is so cool."

"I've been walking very fast," he answered, hesitatingly.

"Don't you think you'd better go in, so as not to take cold?"

"Oh, I don't care if I do take cold." The speech sounded rude. Elizabeth looked at him in surprise.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked.

"I'm mad; that's what's the matter."

"Oh, Fred, you shouldn't get mad: you know it's wrong."

He put up his hand as if she had struck him. "Wrong! wrong! It seems I can't hear anything else but that word. Everything is wrong. Don't say any more about it. I don't want to hear the word again."

Elizabeth did not know what to make of his words, so she said nothing, and for a while they stood in strained silence. After a while he said, "Aunt Hester wants me to be a preacher."

"I am so glad to hear that," she returned. "I think you'll make a good one."

"You too!" he exclaimed, resentfully. "Why should I make a good one? Why need I be one at all?"

"Oh, because you're smart; and then you've always been good."

The young man was suddenly filled with disdain. His anger returned. He felt how utterly out of accord he was with every one else. "Don't you think there is anything else required besides being 'smart' and 'good'?" He himself would have blushed at the tone in which he said this, could he have recognized it. "I'm smart because I happened to pass all my examinations. I got through the high school at eighteen: nearly every one does the same. I'm good because I have never had a chance to be bad: I have never been out of Aunt Hester's sight long enough. Anybody could be good that way."

"But then older people know what is best for us, Fred."

"Why should they? They don't know what's beating inside of us away down here." The boy struck his breast fiercely. "I don't believe they do know half the time what is best, and I don't believe that God intends them to know."

"I wouldn't talk about it, if I were you. I must go in. Won't you come in with me?"

"Not to-night," he replied. "I must be off."

"But papa might give you some advice."

"I've had too much of it now. What I want is room to breathe in once."

"I don't understand you."

"I know you don't; nobody does or tries to. Go in, Lizzie," he said, more calmly. "I don't want you to catch cold, even if I do. Good-night." And he turned away.

The girl stood for a moment looking after him; her eye was moist. Then she pouted, "Fred's real cross to-night," and went in.

It is one of the glaring sarcasms of life to see with what complacency a shallow woman skims the surface of tragedy and thinks that she has sounded the depths.

Fred continued his walk towards home. He was thinking. It ran in him that Elizabeth was a good deal of a fool; and then he felt horrified with himself for thinking it. It did not occur to him that the hard conditions through which he had come had made him mentally and spiritually older than the girl. He was thinking of his position, how perfectly alone he stood. Most of the people whom he knew would see only blind obstinacy in his refusal to be a minister. But were one's inclinations nothing? Was there really nothing in the "call" to preach? So he pondered as he walked, and more and more the hopelessness of his predicament became revealed to him. All his life had been moulded by this one woman's hands. Would not revolt now say to the world, "I am grown now; I do not need this woman who has toiled. I can disobey her with impunity; I will do so."

He went home, and before going in leaned his head long upon the gate and thought. A listless calm had succeeded his storm of passion. He went in and to bed.

At breakfast he seemed almost cheerful, while Mr. Hodges was subdued. His wife had taken refuge in an attitude of injured silence.

"Aunt Hester," said the young man, apparently without effort, "I was wrong yesterday; I am sorry. I will do whatever you say, even to being a preacher." Something came up in his throat and choked him as he saw a brightness come into the face and eyes of his beloved "Uncle 'Liph," but it grew hard and bitter there as Mrs. Hodges replied, "Well, I'm glad the Lord has showed you the errors of your way an' brought you around to a sense o' your dooty to Him an' to me."

Poor, blind, conceited humanity! Interpreters of God, indeed! We reduce the Deity to vulgar fractions. We place our own little ambitions and inclinations before a shrine, and label them "divine messages." We set up our Delphian tripod, and we are the priest and oracles. We despise the plans of Nature's Ruler and substitute our own. With our short sight we affect to take a comprehensive view of eternity. Our horizon is the universe. We spy on the Divine and try to surprise His secrets, or to sneak into His confidence by stealth. We make God the eternal a puppet. We measure infinity with a foot-rule.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Fate is fighting with all her might against a human soul, the greatest victory that the soul can win is to reconcile itself to the unpleasant, which is never quite so unpleasant afterwards. Upon this principle Frederick Brent acted instinctively. What with work and study and contact with his fellow-students, he found the seminary not so bad a place, after all. Indeed, he began to take a sort of pleasure in his pursuits. The spirit of healthy competition in the school whetted

his mind and made him forgetful of many annoyances without. When some fellow-salesman at the store gibed at him for being a parson, it hurt him; but the wound was healed and he was compensated when in debate he triumphed over the crack speaker of his class. It was a part of his training to do earnestly and thoroughly what he had to do, even though it was distasteful, and it was not long before he was spoken of as one of the most promising members of the school.

Having grown as it had, Dexter retained many of the traditions of its earlier and smaller days. Among them was that of making the church the centre of its social and public life. For this reason the young student came in for much attention on account of his standing in the religious college. Another cause which elicited the praise and congratulations of his friends was his extreme youth. That community which could send out a "boy preacher" always deemed itself particularly favored by Providence. Dexter was no exception, and had already begun to bestow the appellation upon young Brent, much to his disgust. He knew the species and detested it. They were mostly ignorant and hypocritical young prigs, in whom their friends had seemed to see some especial merit and had forthwith hoisted them into a position that was as foolish as it was distasteful. They were hailed as youthful prodigies and exploited around the country like a patent medicine or a sideshow. What is remarkable at eighteen is not so striking at twenty-eight. So when their extreme youth was no longer a cause for surprise, the boy preachers settled down into every-day dullness, with nothing except the memory of a flimsy fame to compensate the congregations they bored.

Against this Frederick Brent fought with all his strength. He refused invitation after invitation to "talk" or "exhort," on the plea that he wished to be fully prepared for his work before entering upon it.

But the fame of his oratorical powers was gradually but surely leaking out. The faculty recognized and commended it, so he could not hope long to hide behind his plea, although he dreaded the day when it would no longer serve his purpose.

Some of the "older heads" accused him of an unwarranted fear, of cowardice even, and an attempt to shirk his evident duty. The truth of it was that these same people wanted to hear him and then attack his manner or his doctrine. They could not, would not forget that he was the son of old Tom Brent, the drunkard, and of the terrible, the unspeakable Margaret, his wife. They could not forget that he was born and lived the first years of his life on the "mean" street, when it was a mean street; and when any obstinate old fossil was told of the youth's promise, he would shake his head, as who should say, "What good can come out of that Nazareth?"

But the young man went his way and heeded them not. He knew what they were saying. He knew what they were thinking, even when they held his hand and smiled upon him, and it filled him with a spirit of distrust and resentment, though it put him bravely on his mettle. While he was a man, and in the main manly, sometimes he was roused to an anger almost childish; then, although he did not want to be a

preacher at all, he wished and even prayed to become a great one, just to spite the old fools who shook their heads over him. To his ears had crept, as such tales will creep, some of the stories of his parents' lives, and, while he pitied his mother, there was a great fierceness in his heart against his father.

But as, in the old days, when Miss Prime's discipline would have turned all within him to hardness and bitterness, Eliphalet Hodges stood between him and despair, so now in this crucial time Elizabeth was a softening influence in his life.

As the days came and went, he had continued to go to see her ever since the night when he had stood with her at the gate and felt the bitterness of her lack of sympathy; but all that had passed now, and unconsciously they had grown nearer to each other. It had been a tacit understanding between them until just a few weeks before. It was a warm spring evening: he had just passed through her gate and started towards the house, when the opening chords of the piano struck on his ear through the opened window and arrested him. Elizabeth had a pleasant little voice, with a good deal of natural pathos in it. As the minister's daughter, the scope of her songs was properly, according to Dexter, rather limited, but that evening she was singing softly to herself a love-song. The words were these:

If Death should claim me for her own to-day,
And softly I should falter from your side,
Oh, tell me, loved one, would my memory stay,
And would my image in your heart abide?
Or should I be as some forgotten dream,
That lives its little space, then fades entire?
Should Time send o'er you its relentless stream
To cool your heart, and quench for aye love's fire?

I would not for the world, love, give you pain,
Or ever compass what would cause you grief;
And oh, how well I know that tears are vain!
But love is sweet, my dear, and life is brief;
So, if some day before you I should go
Beyond the sound and sight of song and sea,
'Twould give my spirit stronger wings to know
That you remembered still and wept for me.

She was alone in the room. The song was hardly finished when Brent stepped through the window and laid his hand over hers where they rested on the keys.

"Why do you sing like that, Elizabeth?" he said, tremulously.

She blushed and lowered her eyes beneath his gaze, as if she already knew the words that were on his lips, or feared that her soul lay too bare before him.

"Why do you think of death?" he asked again, imprisoning her hands.

"It was only my mood," she faltered. "I was thinking, and I thought of the song, and I just sang it."

"Were you thinking of any one in particular, Lizzie?"

Her head drooped lower until her face was hidden, but she did not answer. A strange boldness had come to him. He went on: "I

listened as you were singing, and it seemed as if every word was meant for me, Lizzie. It may sound foolish, but I—I love you. Won't you look at me and tell me that I am right in thinking you love me?" She half raised her face to his and murmured one word. It was sufficient for him; he bent down and kissed her. It was the first time he had ever kissed a girl. He did it almost fearfully. It was a kiss in which reverence struggled with passion.

"You are to be my little sweetheart now, and I am to be in your thoughts hereafter when you sing; only we don't want any more such songs as this one. I don't want to 'remember still and weep for you,' I want to have you always by me and work for you. Won't you let me?"

Elizabeth found her tongue for a moment only, but that was enough for her lover. A happy light gleamed in his eyes: his face glowed. He was transfigured. Love does so much for a man.

From that time forward, when he was harassed by cares and trouble, he sought out Elizabeth, and, even though he could not tell her what was in his heart, he found relief in her presence. He did not often speak of his trials to her, for, in spite of his love for her, he felt that she could not understand; but the pleasure he found in her company put sweetness into his life and made his burdens easier to bear.

Only once had a little shadow come between them, and the fact that so little a thing could have made a shadow shows in what a narrow, constrained atmosphere the two young people lived. Young Brent still had his half-day position in the store, and when the employees of a rival establishment challenged Daniels's clerks to a game of baseball, he was duly chosen as one of the men to uphold the honor of their house upon the diamond.

The young man was not fossilized. He had strength and the capacity for enjoyment, so he accepted without a thought of wrong. The Saturday came, the game was played. Fred Brent took part, and thereby brought a hornets' nest about his ears. It would scarcely have been so bad, but the young man entered the game with all the zest and earnestness of his intense nature, and several times by brilliant playing saved his side from defeat. In consequence, his name was in the mouth of every one who had seen or heard of the contest. He was going home that evening, feeling pleased and satisfied with himself, when he thought he would drop in a moment on the way and see Elizabeth. He had hardly got into the house before he saw from her manner that something was wrong, and he wondered what it could be. He was soon to learn.

"Oh, Fred," said the girl, reproachfully, "is it true that you have been playing baseball?"

"Baseball, yes: what of it? What are you looking so horrified about?"

"Did you think it was right for you, in your position, to play?"

"If I had thought it was wrong I assuredly should not have played," the young man returned.

"Everybody is talking about it, and father says he thinks you have disgraced your calling."

"Disgraced my calling by playing an innocent game?"

"But father thinks it is a shame for a man who is preparing to do such work as yours to have people talking about him as a mere ball-player."

The blood mounted in hot surges to the young man's face. He felt like saying, "Your father be hanged," but he controlled his anger, and said, quietly, "Elizabeth, don't you ever think for yourself?"

"I suppose I do, Fred, but I have been brought up to respect what my elders think and say."

"Don't you think that they, as well as we, can be narrow and mistaken?"

"It is not for me to judge them. My part is to obey."

"You have learned an excellent lesson," he returned, bitterly. "That is just the thing: 'obey, obey.' Well, I will. I will be a stick, a dolt. I will be as unlike what God intended me to be as possible. I will be just what your father and Aunt Hester and you want me to be. I will let them think for me and save my soul. I am too much an imbecile to attempt to work out my own salvation. No, Elizabeth, I will not play ball any more. I can imagine the horrified commotion it caused among the angels when they looked down and saw me pitching. When I get back to school I shall look up the four Gospels' views on ball-playing."

"Fred, I don't like you when you talk that way."

"I won't do that any more, either." He rose abruptly. "Good-by, Elizabeth. I am off." He was afraid to stay, lest more bitter words should come to his lips.

"Good-by, Fred," she said. "I hope you understand."

The young man wondered as he walked homeward if the girl he had chosen was not a little bit prim. Then he thought of her father, and said to himself, even as people would have said of himself, "How can she help it, with such a father?"

All his brightness had been dashed. He was irritated because the thing was so small, so utterly absurd. It was like the sting of a miserable little insect,—just enough to smart, and not enough to need a strong remedy. The news of the game had also preceded him home, and his guardian's opinion of the propriety of his action did not tend to soothe his mind. Mrs. Hodges forcibly expressed herself as follows: "I put baseball-playin' right down with dancin' and sich like. It ain't no fittin' occupation for any one that's a-goin' into the ministry. It's idleness, to begin with; it's a-wastin' the precious time that's been given us for a better use. A young man that's goin' to minister to people's souls ought to be consecrated to the work before he begins it. Who ever heerd tell of Jesus playin' baseball?"

Among a certain class of debaters such an argument is always supposed to be clinching, unanswerable, final. But Mr. Hodges raised his voice in protest. "I ain't a-goin' to keep still no longer. I don't believe the boy's done a bit o' harm. There's lots of things the Lord didn't do that He didn't forbid human bein's to do. We ain't none of us divine, but you mark my words, Freddie, an' I say it right here so's your aunt Hester can hear me too, you mark my words: ef you never

do nothin' worse than what you've been a-doin' to-day, it'll be mighty easy for you to read your title clear to mansions in the skies."

"Omph huh, 'Liphalet, there ain't nothin' so easy as talkin' when Satan's a-promptin' you."

"There you go, Hester, there you go ag'in, a-pattin' the devil on the back. I 'low the Old Boy must be tickled to death with all the compliments Christian people give him."

"A body'd about as well be complimentin' the devil as to be a-coun-tenancin' his works as you air."

The old man stopped with a piece half-way to his mouth. "Now jest listen at that! Hester Prime, ain't you ashamed of yoreself? Me a-coun-tenancin' wrong! Sayin' that to me, an' me ol' enough to be—to be—well, I'm your husband, anyway."

In times of excitement he was apt to forget this fact for the instant and give his wife her maiden name, as if all that was sharp in her belonged to that prenuptial period. But this storm relieved the atmosphere of its tension. Mrs. Hodges felt better for having spoken her mind, and Mr. Hodges for having answered, while the young man was relieved by the championship of his elder, and so the storm blew over. It was several days before our young friend saw Elizabeth again; but, thanks to favoring winds, the sky had also cleared in that direction.

It was through such petty calms and storms that Fred passed the days and weeks of his first year at the seminary. Some of them were small annoyances, to be sure, but he felt them deeply, and the sting of them rankled. It is not to be supposed, because there was no specific outburst, that he was entirely at rest. Vesuvius had slumbered long before Pompeii's direful day. His mind was often in revolt, but he kept it to himself or confided it to only one friend. This friend was a fellow-student at the seminary, a man older than Fred by some years. He had first begun a literary career, but had renounced it for the ministry. Even to him Fred would not commit himself until, near the end of the year, Taylor declared his intention of now renouncing the study of theology for his old pursuits. Then Brent's longing to be free likewise drew his story from his lips.

Taylor listened to him with the air of one who had been through it all and could sympathize. Then he surprised his friend by saying, "Don't be a fool, Brent. It's all very nice and easy to talk about striking out for one's self, and all that. I've been through it all myself. My advice to you is, stay here, go through the academic discipline, and be a parson. Get into a rut if you will, for some ruts are safe. They keep us from toppling over, when we are buried deep. This may be a sort of weak philosophy I am trying to teach you, but it is the happiest. If I can save any man from self-delusion, I want to do it. I'll tell you why. When I was at school some fool put it into my head that I could write. I hardly know how it came about. I began scribbling of my own accord and for my own amusement. Sometimes I showed the things to my friend, who was a fool: he bade me keep on, saying that I had talent. I didn't believe it at first. But when a fellow keeps dinging at another with one remark, after a while he grows to believe it, especially when it is pleasant. It is vastly easy to

believe what we want to believe. So I came to think that I could write, and my soul was fired with the ambition to make a name for myself in literature. When I should have been turning Virgil into English for class-room, I was turning out more or less deformed verse of my own, or rapt in the contemplation of some plot for story or play. But somehow I got through school without a decided flunk. In the mean time some of my lines had found their way into print, and the little checks I received for them had set my head buzzing with dreams of wealth to be made by my pen. If we could only pass the pitfalls of that dreaming age of youth, most of us would get along fairly well in this matter-of-fact old world. But we are likely to follow blindly the leadings of our dreams until we run our heads smack into a corner-post of reality. Then we awaken, but in most cases too late.

"I am glad to say that my father had the good sense to discourage my aspirations. He wanted me to take a profession. But, elated by the applause of my friends, I scorned the idea. What, mew my talents up in a court-room or a hospital? Never! It makes me sick when I look back upon it and see what a fool I was. I settled down at home and began writing. Lots of things came back from periodicals to which I sent them; but I had been told that this was the common lot of all writers, and I plodded on. A few things sold, just enough to keep my hopes in a state of unstable equilibrium.

"Well, it's no use to tell you how I went on in that way for four years, clinging and losing hold, standing and slipping, seeing the prize recede just as I seemed to grasp it. Then came the awakening. I saw that it would have been better just to go on and do the conventional thing. I found this out too late, and I came here to try to remedy it, but I can't. No one can. You get your mind into a condition where the ordinary routine of study is an impossibility, and you cannot go back and take up the traps you have laid, so you keep struggling on, wasting your energy, hoping against hope. Then suddenly you find out that you are and can be only third- or at best second-rate. God, what a discovery it is! How you try to fight it off until the last moment! But it comes upon you surely and crushingly, and, cut, bruised, wounded, you slip away from the face of the world. If you are a brave man, you say boldly to yourself, 'I will eke out an existence in some humble way,' and you go away to a life of longing and regret. If you are a coward, you either leap over the parapets of life to hell, or go creeping back and fall at the feet of the thing that has damned you, willing to be third-rate, anything; for you are stung with the poison that never leaves your blood. So it has been with me: even when I found that I must choose a calling, I chose the one that gave me most time to nurse the serpent that had stung me."

Taylor ceased speaking, and looked a little ashamed of his vehemence.

"This is your story," said Brent; "but men differ and conditions differ. I will accept all the misery, all the pain and defeat you have suffered, to be free to choose my own course."

Taylor threw up his hands with a deprecatory gesture. "There," he said; "it is always so. I might as well have talked to the wind."

So the fitful calms and Elizabeth's love had not cured Frederick Brent's heart of its one eating disease, the desire for freedom.

CHAPTER XI.

It was not until early in Brent's second year at the Bible Seminary that he was compelled to go through the ordeal he so much dreaded, that of filling a city pulpit. The Dexterites had been wont to complain that since the advent among them of the theological school their churches had been turned into recitation-rooms for the raw students; but of "old Tom Brent's boy," as they still called him, they could never make this complaint. So, as humanity loves to grumble, the congregations began to find fault because he did not do as his fellows did.

The rumors of his prowess in the class-room and his eloquence in the society hall had not abated, and the curiosity of his fellow-townsmen had been whetted to a point where endurance was longer impossible. Indeed, it is open to question whether it was not by connivance of the minister himself, backed by his trustees on one side and the college authorities on the other, that Brent was finally deputed to supply the place of the Rev. Mr. Simpson, who was affected by an indisposition, fancied, pretended, or otherwise.

The news struck the young man like a thunderbolt, albeit he had been expecting it. He attempted to make his usual excuse, but the kindly old professor who had notified him smiled into his face, and, patting his shoulder, said, "It's no use, Brent. I'd go and make the best of it; they're bound to have you. I understand your diffidence in the matter, and, knowing how you stand in class, it does credit to your modesty."

The old man passed on. He said he understood, but in his heart the young student standing there helpless, hopeless, knew that he did not understand, that he could not. Only he himself could perceive it in all its trying details. Only he himself knew fully or could know what the event involved,—that when he arose to preach, to nine-tenths of the congregation he would not be Frederick Brent, student, but "old Tom Brent's boy." He recoiled from the thought.

Many a fireside saint has said, "Why did not Savonarola tempt the hot ploughshares? God would not have let them burn him." Faith is a beautiful thing. But Savonarola had the ploughshares at his feet. The children of Israel stepped into the Red Sea before the waters parted, but then Moses was with them, and, what was more, Pharaoh was behind them.

At home, the intelligence of what Brent was to do was received in different manner by Mrs. Hodges and her husband. The good lady launched immediately into a lecture on the duty that was placed in his

hands; but Eliphalet was silent as they sat at the table. He said nothing until after supper was over, and then he whispered to his young friend as he started to his room, "I know jest how you feel, Freddie. It seems that I oughtn't to call you that now; but I 'low you'll allus be 'Freddie' to me."

"Don't ever call me anything else, if you please, Uncle 'Liph," said the young man, pressing the other's hand.

"I think I kin understand you better than most people," Mr. Hodges went on; "an' I know it ain't no easy task that you've got before you."

"You've always understood me better than any one, and—and I wish you knew what it has meant to me, and that I could thank you somehow."

"'Sh, my boy. It's thanks enough to hear them words from you. Now you jest calm yoreself, an' when Sunday comes—I don't know as I'd ought to say it this way, but I mean it all in a Christian sperrit—when Sunday comes, Freddie, my boy, you jest go in an' give 'em fits."

The two parted with another pressure of the hand, and it must be confessed that the old man looked a little bit sheepish when his wife hoped he had been giving Fred good advice.

"You don't reckon, Hester, that I'd give him any other kind, do you?"

"Not intentionally, 'Liphalet; but when it comes to advice, there's p'int's o' view." Mrs. Hodges seemed suspicious of her husband's capabilities as an adviser.

"There's some times when people'd a good deal ruther have sympathy than advice."

"An' I reckon, 'cordin' to yore way o' thinkin', this is one o' them. Well, I intend to try to do my dooty in this matter, as I've tried to do it all along."

"Hester, yore dooty'll kill you yit. It's a wonder you don't git tired a-lookin' it in the face."

"I ain't a-goin' to shirk it, jest to live in pleasure an' ease."

"No need o' shirkin', Hester, no need o' shirkin'; but they's some people that wouldn't be content without rowin' down stream."

"An' then, mind you, 'Liphalet, I ain't a-exchangin' words with you, fur that's idleness, but there's others that wouldn't row up stream, but 'ud wait an' hope fur a wind to push 'em." These impersonalities were as near "spatting" as Mr. and Mrs. Hodges ever got.

Through all the community that clustered about Mr. Simpson's church and drew its thoughts, ideas, and subjects of gossip therefrom, ran like wildfire the news that at last they were to have a chance to judge of young Brent's merits for themselves. It caused a stir among old and young, and in the days preceding the memorable Sunday little else was talked of.

When it reached the ears of old Dan'l Hastings, who limped around now upon two canes, but was as acrimonious as ever, he exclaimed, tapping the ground with one of his sticks for emphasis, "What! that young Brent preachin' in our church, in our minister's pulpit! It's

a shame,—an' he the born son of old Tom Brent, that all the town knows was the worst sinner hereabouts. I ain't a-goin' to go; I ain't a-goin' to go."

"Don't you be afeared to go, Dan'l: there ain't no danger that his docterns air a-goin' to be as strong as his father's whiskey," said his old enemy.

"Oh, it's fur the likes o' you, Thomas Donaldson, to be a-talkin' o' docterns an' whiskey in the same breath. You never did have no reverence," said the old man, testily.

"An' yet, Dan'l, I've found docterns an' whiskey give out by the same breath."

Mr. Hastings did not think it necessary to notice this remark. He went on with his tirade against the prospective "supply:" "Why can't elder Simpson preach hisself, I'd like to know, instead o' puttin' up that young upstart to talk to his betters? Why, I mind the time that that boy had to be took out o' church by the hand fur laffin' at me,—at me, mind you," the old man repeated, shaking his stick; "laffin' at me when I was expoundin' the word."

"That's ter'ble, Dan'l; fur, as fur as I kin ricollee', when you're a-expoundin' the word it ain't no laffin' matter."

"I tell you, Thomas Donaldson, the world's a-goin' down hill fast; but I ain't a-goin' to help it along. I ain't a-goin' to hear that Brent boy preach."

This declaration, however, did not prevent the venerable Dan'l from being early in his seat on the following Sunday morning, sternly, uncompromisingly critical.

As might have been expected, the church was crowded. Friends, enemies, and the merely curious filled the seats and blocked the aisles. The chapel had been greatly enlarged to accommodate its growing congregation, but on this day it was totally inadequate to hold the people who flocked to its doors.

The Rev. Mr. Simpson was so far recovered from his indisposition as to be able to be present and assist with the service. Elizabeth was there, looking proud and happy and anxious. Mrs. Hodges was in her accustomed place on the ladies' side of the pulpit. She had put new strings to her bonnet in honor of the occasion. Her face wore a look of great severity. An unregenerate wag in the back part of the church pointed her out to his companions and remarked that she looked as if she'd spank the preacher if he didn't do well. "Poor fellow, if he sees that face he'll break down, sure." Opposite, in the "amen corner," the countenance of the good Eliphalet was a study in changing expressions. It was alternately possessed by fear, doubt, anxiety, and exultation.

Sophy Davis sat in a front seat, spick and span in a new dress which might have been made for the occasion. People said that she was making eyes at her young fellow-salesman, though she was older than he. Mrs. Martin and her friend whispered together a little farther back.

A short time before the service began, Brent entered by a side door near the pulpit and ascended to his place. His entrance caused a

marked sensation. His appearance was impressive. The youthful face was white and almost rigid in its lines. "Scared to death," was the mental note of a good many who saw him. But his step was firm. As Elizabeth looked at him, she felt proud that such a man loved her. He was not handsome. His features were irregular, but his eyes were clear and fearless. If a certain cowardice had held him back from this ordeal, it was surely not because he trembled for himself. The life he had lived and the battles he had fought had given a compression to his lips that corrected a natural tendency to weakness in his mouth. His head was set squarely on his broad shoulders. He was above medium height, but not loosely framed. He looked the embodiment of strength.

"He ain't a bit like his father," said some one.

"He's like his father was in his best days," replied another.

"He don't look like he's overpleased with the business. They say he didn't want to come."

"Well, I guess it's purty resky work gittin' up to speak before all these people that's knowed him all his life, an' know where an' what he come from."

"They say, too, that he's some pumpkins out at the college."

"I 'ain't much faith in these school-made preachers; but we'll soon see what he kin do in the pulpit. We've heerd preachers, an' we kin compare."

"That's so: we've heerd some preachers in our day. He must toe the mark. He may be all right at college, but he's in a pulpit now that has held preachers fur shore. A pebble's all right among pebbles, but it looks mighty small 'longside o' boulders. Why, Brother Simpson himself never would 'a' got a special dispensation to hold the church all these years, ef it hadn't been fur the people backin' him up an' Conference was afraid they'd leave the connection."

"Well, ef this boy is anything, Lord only knows where he gets it, fur everybody knows——"

"'Sh!"

The buzz which had attended the young speaker's entrance subsided as Mr. Simpson rose and gave out the hymn. That finished, he ran his eyes over the front seats of the assembly and then said, "Brother Hastings, lead us in prayer."

The old man paused for an instant as if surprised, and then got slowly to his knees. It was a strange selection, but we have seen that this particular parson was capable of doing strange things. In the course of a supplication of some fifteen minutes' duration, Brother Hastings managed to vent his spleen upon the people and to pay the Lord a few clumsy compliments. During the usual special blessing which is asked upon the preacher of the hour, he prayed, "O Lord, let not the rarin' horses of his youth run away with Thy chariot of eternal truth. Lord, cool his head and warm his heart and settle him firm. Grant that he may fully realize where he's a-standin' at, an' who he's a-speakin' to. Do Thou not let *him* speak, but speak through him, that Thy gospel may be preached to-day as Thy prophets of old preached it."

Throughout the prayer, but one thought was running through Frederick Brent's mind, and his heart was crying in its anguish, "Oh, my God, my God, why do they hound me so?"

It is a terrible thing, this first effort before the home people, especially when home has not been kind.

When he arose to meet the people's eyes, his face was haggard and he felt weak. But unflinchingly he swept his eyes over the crowd, and that instant's glance brought before him all the panorama of the past years. There before him was the sneaking Billy Tompkins, now grown to the maturity of being called "Bill." Then there was Dan'l Hastings. Oh, that night, years ago, when he had been marched up the aisle with crimson face! In one brief second he lived it all over again, the shame, the disgrace, the misery of it. There, severe, critical, expectant, sat his guardian, the master-hand who had manipulated all the machinery of his life. All this passed through his mind in a flash, as he stood there facing the people. His face changed. The haggard look passed away. His eyes kindled, his cheeks mantled. Even in the pulpit, even in the house of God, about to speak His word, the blood sped hotly through his veins, and anger burned at his heart. But he crushed down his feelings for the moment, and began in a clear ringing voice, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The lesson he drew from the words was God's recognition of the fallibility of human judgment, and the self-condemnation brought about by ignoring the prohibition in the text. By an effort, he spoke deliberately at first, but the fire in his heart came out more and more in his words as he progressed. "Blinded by our own prejudices," he said, "circumscribed by our own ignorance, we dare to set ourselves up as censors of our fellow-men. Unable to see the whole chain of life which God has forged, we take a single link and say that it is faulty. Too narrow to see His broad plan, we take a patch of it and say, 'This is not good.' There is One who works even through evil that good may come, but we take the sin of our brother, and, without seeing or knowing what went before it or shall come after, condemn him. What false, blind, petty judges we are! You women who are condemning your fallen sisters, you men who are execrating your sinful brothers, if Christ to-day were to command, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone,' look into your own hearts and answer me, how many of you would dare to lift a hand? How many of you have taken the beam out of your own eye before attempting to pluck the mote out of your brother's? O ye pharisaical ones, who stand in the public places and thank God that you are not as other men, beware, beware. The condemnation that surely and inevitably shall fall upon you is not the judgment of Jesus Christ. It is not the sentence of the Father. It is your own self-condemnation, without charity, without forbearance, without love; 'for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged.'

"Stand by the wayside if you will. Draw aside your skirts in the vainglory of self-righteousness from the passing multitude. Say to each other, if you will, 'This woman is a sinner: this man is a crim-

inal.' Close your eyes against their acts of repentance, harden your hearts against their pleas for forgiveness, withhold mercy and pardon and charity; but I tell you of One who has exalted charity into the highest and best of virtues. I bring you the message of One whose judgment is tempered by divine love. He is seeing you. He is hearing you. Over the parapets of high heaven the gentle Father leans waiting to take into His soul any breath of human love or charity which floats up to Him from this sin-parched world. What have you done to merit His approval? Have you been kind, or have you been hard? Have you been gentle, or have you been harsh? Have you been charitable, or have you hunted out all the evil and closed your eyes to all the good? You have forgotten, O ye of little faith, you have forgotten, you without charity in your hearts, and you who claim to follow Christ and yet have no love for your fellows,—you have forgotten that God is a God of wrath as well as of love; that Christ hath anger as well as pity; that He who holds the hyssop of divine mercy holds also the scourge of divine indignation. You have forgotten that the lash you so love to wield over your brother's back shall be laid upon your own by Him who whipped the money-changers from His temple. Listen! The day shall come when the condemnation you are accumulating against yourselves shall overwhelm you. Stop trying to steal the prerogative of heaven. Judge not. God only is just!"

The silence throughout the sermon was intense. During the closing words which have been quoted, it was like a presence in the chapel. The voice of the preacher rang out like a clarion. His eyes looked before him as if he saw into the future. His hand was uplifted as if he would call down upon them the very judgment which he predicted.

Without more words he sat down. No one moved or spoke for an instant. Dan'l Hastings let his cane fall upon the floor. It echoed through the silent place with a crash. Some of the women started and half cried out; but the spell was now partly broken. Mr. Simpson suddenly remembered to pray, and the gossips forgot to whisper when their heads were bowed. There were some pale faces in the crowd, and some which the galling of tears had made red. There was in the atmosphere something of the same tense silence that follows a terrific thunder-clap. And so the service ended, and the people filed out of church silent still. Some few remained behind to shake the preacher's hand, but as soon as the benediction was over he hurried out the side door, and, before any one could intercept him, was on his way home. But he left a willing substitute. Mrs. Hodges accepted all his congratulations with complacent condescension.

"Dan'l," said Thomas Donaldson as he helped the old man down the church steps, "I was mistaken about the docterns an' the whiskey. It was stronger an' better, because it was the pure stuff."

"I 'ain't got a word to say," said Dan'l, "'ceptin' that a good deal of it was jest sass." But he kept mumbling to himself as he hobbled along, "Jedge not, fur you're a-pilin' up sentences on yoreself. I never thought of it that way before; no, I never."

Brent did not come out of his room to dinner that afternoon.

Mrs. Hodges was for calling him, but the old man objected. "No, Hester," he said, "Freddie jest wants to be let alone. He's a-feelin' now."

"But, 'Liphalet, he ought to know how nice people talked about his sermon. I tell you that was my kind o' doctern. It's wonderful how a child will learn."

Notwithstanding his belief that his young friend wanted to be left alone, the old man slipped into his room later on with a cup of tea. The young man sat before the table, his head buried in his hands. Eliphalet set the cup and saucer down and turned to go, but he paused at the door and said, "Thank the Lord fur the way you give it to 'em, Freddie. It was worth a dollar." He would have hurried out, but the young man sprang up and seized his hand, exclaiming, "It was wrong, Uncle 'Liph, it was wrong of me. I saw them sitting about me like jackals waiting for their prey; I remembered all that I had been and all that I was; I knew what they were thinking, and I was angry, angry. God forgive me! That sermon was preached from as hot a heart as ever did murder."

The old man stroked the young one's hair as he would a child's. "Never mind," he said. "It don't matter what you felt. That's between you an' Him. I only know what you said, an' that's all I care about. Didn't you speak about the Lord a-whippin' the money-changers from the temple? Ain't lots o' them worse than the money-changers? Wasn't Christ divine? Ain't you human? Would a body expect you to feel less 'n He did? Huh! jest don't you worry; remember that you didn't hit a head that wasn't in striking distance." And the old man pressed the boy back into his chair and slipped out.

CHAPTER XII.

BESIDE an absolute refusal again to supply, Brent made no sign of the rebellion which was in him, and his second year slipped quickly and uneventfully away. He went to and from his duties silent and self-contained. He did not confide in Mr. Hodges, because his guardian seemed to grow more and more jealous of their friendship. He could not confide in Elizabeth, on account of a growing conviction that she did not sympathize with him fully. But his real feelings may be gathered from a letter which he wrote to his friend Taylor some two months after the events recorded in the last chapter.

"MY DEAR TAYLOR," it ran, "time and again I have told myself that I would write you a line, keeping you in touch, as I promised, with my progress. Many times have I thought of our last talk together, and still I think as I thought then,—that in spite of all your disadvantages and your defeats you have the best of it. When you fail, it is your own failure, and you bear down with you only your own hopes and struggles and ideals. If I fail, there falls with me all the framework of pride and anxiety that has so long pushed me for-

ward and held me up. For my own failure I should not sorrow: my concern would be for the one who has so carefully shaped me after a pattern of her own. However else one may feel, one must be fair to the ambitions of others, even though one is the mere material that is heated and beaten into form on the anvil of another's will. But I am ripe for revolt. The devil is in me,—a restrained, quiet, well-appearing devil, but all the more terrible for that.

"I have at last supplied one of the pulpits here, that of my own church. The Rev. Mr. Simpson was afflicted with a convenient and adaptable indisposition which would not allow him to preach, and I was deputed to fill his place. I knew what a trial it would be, and had carefully written out my sermon, but I am afraid I did not adhere very strictly to the manuscript. I think I lost my head. I know I lost my temper. But the sermon was a nine days' wonder, and I have had to refuse a dozen subsequent offers to supply. It is all very sordid and sickening and theatrical. The good old Lowry tried to show me that it was my duty and for my good, but I have set my foot down not to supply again, and so they let me alone now.

"It seems to me that that one sermon forged a chain which holds me in a position that I hate. It is a public declaration that I am or mean to be a preacher, and I must either adhere to it or break desperately away. Do you know, I feel myself to be an arrant coward. If I had half the strength that you have, I should have been out of it long ago; but the habit of obedience grows strong upon a man.

"There is but one crowning act to be added to this drama of deceit and infamy,—my ordination. I know how all the other fellows are looking forward to it, and how, according to all the prescribed canons, I should view the momentous day; but I am I. Have you ever had one of those dreams where a huge octopus approaches you slowly but certainly, enfolding you in his arms and twining his horrid tentacles about your helpless form? What an agony of dread you feel! You try to move or cry out, but you cannot, and the arms begin to embrace you and draw you towards the great body. Just so I feel about the day of the ceremony that shall take me into the body of which I was never destined to be a member.

"Are you living in a garret? Are you subsisting on a crust? Happy, happy fellow! But, thank God, the ordination does not take place until next year, and perhaps in that time I may find some means of escape. If I do not, I know that I shall have your sympathy; but don't express it. Ever sincerely yours,

"BRENT."

But the year was passing, and nothing happened to release him. He found himself being pushed forward at the next term with unusual rapidity, but he did not mind it; the work rather gave him relief from more unpleasant thoughts. He went at it with eagerness and mastered it easily. His fellow-students looked on him with envy, but he went on his way unheeding and worked for the very love of being active, until one day he understood.

It was nearing the end of the term when a fellow-student remarked to him, "Well, Brent, it isn't every man that could have done it, but you'll get your reward in a month or so now."

"What do you mean?" asked Brent. "Done what?"

"Now don't be modest," rejoined the other: "I am really glad to see you do it. I have no envy."

"Really, Barker, I don't understand you."

"Why, I mean you are finishing two years in one."

"Oh, pshaw! it will hardly amount to that."

"Oh, well, you will get in with the senior class men."

"Get in with the senior class?"

"It will be kind of nice, a year before your time, to be standing in the way of any appointive plums that may happen to fall; and then you don't have to go miles away from home before you can be made a full-fledged shepherd. Well, here is my hand on it, anyway."

Brent took the proffered hand in an almost dazed condition. It had all suddenly flashed across his mind, the reason for his haste and his added work. What a blind fool he had been!

The Church Conference met at Dexter that year, and they had hurried him through in order that he might be ready for ordination thereat.

Alleging illness as an excuse, he did not appear at recitation that day. The shock had come too suddenly for him. Was he thus to be entrapped? Could he do nothing? He felt that ordination would bind him forever to the distasteful work. He had only a month in which to prevent it. He would do it. From that day he tried to fall gradually back in his work; but it was too late; the good record which he had unwittingly piled up carried him through *volens volens*.

The week before Conference met, Frederick Brent, residing at Dexter, by special request of the faculty was presented as a candidate for ordination. Even his enemies in the community said, "Surely there is something in that boy."

Mrs. Hester Hodges was delighted. She presented him with his ordination suit, and altogether displayed a pride and pleasure that almost reconciled the young man to his fate. In the days immediately preceding the event she was almost tender with him, and if he had been strong enough to make a resolve inimical to her hopes, the disappointment which he knew failure would bring to her would have greatly weakened it.

Now, Conference is a great event in the circles of that sect of which Cory Chapel was a star congregation, and the town where it convenes, or "sets," as the popular phrase goes, is an honored place. It takes upon itself an air of unusual bustle. There is a great deal of house-cleaning, hanging of curtains, and laying of carpets, just prior to the time. People from the rural parts about come into town and settle for the week. Ministers and lay delegates from all the churches in the district, comprising perhaps half of a large State or parts of two, come and are quartered upon the local members of the connection. For two weeks beforehand the general question that passes from one housewife to another is, "How many and whom are

you going to take?" Many are the heartburnings and jealousies aroused by the disposition of some popular preacher whom a dozen members of the flock desire to entertain, while the less distinguished visitors must bide their time and be stuck in when and where they may. The "big guns" of the Church are all present, and all the "little guns" are scattered about them, popping and snapping every time a "big gun" booms.

But of all the days of commotion and excitement, the climax is ordination day, when candidates for the ministry, college students, and local preachers are examined and either rejected or admitted to the company of the elect. It is common on that day for some old dignitary of the church, seldom a less person than the bishop himself, to preach the sermon. Then, if the fatted calf is not killed, at least the fatted fowls are, and feasting and rejoicing rule the occasion.

This ordination day was no exception. A class of ten stood up before the examining committee and answered the questions put to them. Among them stood Frederick Brent. He wished, he tried, to fail in his answers and be rejected, even though it meant disgrace; but, try as he would, he could not. Force of habit was too strong for him; or was it that some unseen and relentless power was carrying him on and on against his will? He clinched his hands; the beads of perspiration broke out on his brow; but ever as the essential questions came to him his tongue seemed to move of its own volition, without command from the brain, and the murmurs of approval told him that he was answering aright. Never did man struggle harder for brilliant success than this one for ignominious failure. Then some whisper in his consciousness told him that it was over. He felt the laying of hands upon his head. He heard the old bishop saying, "Behold, even from the lowliest God taketh His workers," and he felt a flash of resentment, but it was only momentary. He was benumbed. Something seemed to be saying in his mind, "Will the old fool never have done?" But it did not appear to be himself. It was afar off and apart from him. The next he knew, a wet cheek was laid against his own. It was Aunt Hester. She was crying and holding his hand. Afterwards people were shaking hands with him and offering their congratulations; but he answered them in a helpless, mechanical way, as he had answered the questions.

He sat through the sermon and heard it not. But some interest revived in him as the appointments were being read. He heard the bishop say, "It gives me pain to announce the resignation of one who has so long served in the Master's vineyard, but our dear brother Simpson has decided that he is too old for active work, and has asked to be retired. While we do this with pain and sorrow for the loss—though we do not wholly lose him—of so able a man, we feel that we cannot do better than appoint as his successor in this charge the young man whom you have all seen so brilliantly enter into the ranks of consecrated workers, the Rev. Frederick Brent."

A murmur of approval went round the assembly, and a few open "amens" broke forth as the bishop sat down. It sounded to the ears of the young preacher like the breaking of waves on a far-off shore;

and then the meaning of all that had happened sifted through his benumbed intellect, and he strove to rise. He would refuse to act. He would protest. He would tell them that he did not want to preach. But something held him down. He could not rise. The light went blue and green and purple before him. The church, with its sea of faces, spun round and round; his head fell forward.

"He has fainted," said some one.

"The excitement has been too much for him."

"Poor young man, he has been studying too hard, working for this."

They carried him out and took him home, and the old bishop offered a special prayer for his speedy recovery, and that being recovered he might bear his new responsibilities with becoming meekness.

When the young minister came to himself, he was lying on the bed in his own room, and Mrs. Hodges, Eliphalet, and a doctor were bending over him.

"He's coming round all right now," said the medical man. "You won't need me any longer." And he departed.

"How are you now, Fred?" asked Mrs. Hodges.

The young man closed his eyes again and did not answer. He had awakened to a full realization of his position, and a dull misery lay at his heart. He wished that he could die then and there, for death seemed the only escape from his bondage. He was bound, irrevocably bound.

"Poor child," Mrs. Hodges went on, "it was awful tryin' on his nerves. Joy is worse'n sorrow, sometimes; an' then he'd been workin' so hard. I'd never 'a' believed he could do it, ef Brother Simpson hadn't stuck up fur it."

"She knew it, then," thought Fred. "It was all planned."

"I don't think you'd better talk, Hester," said her husband, in a low voice. He had seen a spasm pass over the face of the prostrate youth.

"Well, I'll go out an' see about the dinner. Some o' the folks I've invited will be comin' in purty soon, an' others'll be droppin' in to inquire how he is. I do hope he'll be well enough to come to the table: it won't seem hardly like an ordination dinner without the principal person. Jes' set by him, 'Liphalet, an' give him them drops the doctor left."

As soon as he heard the door close behind her, Brent opened his eyes and suddenly laid his hand on the old man's shoulder. "You won't let anybody see me, Uncle 'Liph? you won't let them come in here?"

"No, no, my boy, not ef you don't want 'em," said the old man.

"I shall have to think it all over before I see any one. I am not quite clear yet."

"I 'low it was unexpected."

"Did you know, Uncle 'Liph?" he asked, fixing his eyes upon his old friend's face.

"I know'd they was a-plannin' somethin', but I never could find out what, or I would have told you."

A look of relief passed over Brent's face. Just then Mrs. Hodges opened the door. "Here's Elizabeth to see him," she said.

"Sh," said the old man, with great ostentation; and, tiptoeing over to the door, he partly drew it to, putting his head outside to whisper, "He is too weak; it ain't best fur him to see nobody now."

He closed the door and returned to his seat. "It was 'Lizabeth," he said. "Was I right?"

For answer the patient arose from the bed and walked weakly over to his side.

"Tut, tut, tut, Freddie," said Eliphalet, hesitating over the name. "You'd better lay down now; you ain't any too strong yet."

The young man leaned heavily on his chair, and looked into his friend's eyes. "If God had given me such a man as you as a father, or even as a guardian, I would not have been damned," he said.

"Sh, 'sh, my boy. Don't say that. You're goin' to be all right; you're—you're——" Eliphalet's eyes were moist, and his voice choked here. Rising, he suddenly threw his arms around Fred's neck, crying, "You are my son. God has give you to me to nurse in the time of your trial."

The young man returned the embrace; and so Mrs. Hodges found them when she opened the door softly and peered in. She closed it noiselessly and withdrew.

"Well, I never!" she said. There was a questioning wonder in her face.

"I don't know what to make of them two," she added: "they couldn't have been lovin'er ef they had been father and son."

After a while the guests began to arrive for the dinner. Many were the inquiries and calls for the new minister, but to them all Eliphalet made the same answer: "He ain't well enough to see folks."

Mrs. Hodges herself did her best to bring him out, or to get him to let some of the guests in, but he would not. Finally her patience gave way, and she exclaimed, "Well, now, Frederick Brent, you must know that you air the pastor of a church, an' you've got to make some sacrifices for people's sake. Ef you kin possibly git up,—an' I know you kin,—you ought to come out an' show yoreself for a little while, anyhow. You've got some responsibilities now."

"I didn't ask for them," he answered, coldly. There was a set look about his lips. "Neither will I come out or see any one. If I am old enough to be the pastor of a church, I am old enough to know my will and have it."

Mrs. Hodges appeared startled at the speech. She felt vaguely that there was a new element in the boy's character since morning. He was on the instant a man. It was as if clay had suddenly hardened in the potter's hands. She could no longer mould or ply it. In that moment she recognized the fact.

The dinner was all that could be expected, and her visitors enjoyed it, in spite of the absence of the guest of honor, but for the hostess it was a dismal failure. After wielding the sceptre for years, it had been suddenly snatched from her hand; and she felt lost and helpless, deprived of her power.

CHAPTER XIII.

As Brent thought of the long struggle before him, he began to wish that there might be something organically wrong with him which the shock would irritate into fatal illness. But even while he thought this he sneered at himself for the weakness. A weakness self-confessed holds the possibility of strength. So in a few days he rallied and took up the burden of his life again. As before he had found relief in study, now he stilled his pains and misgivings by a strict attention to the work which his place involved.

His was not an easy position for a young man. He had to go through the ordeal of pastoral visits. He had to condole with old ladies who thought a preacher had nothing else to do than to listen to the recital of their ailments. He had to pray with poor and stricken families whose conditions reminded him strongly of what his own must have been. He had to speak words of serious admonition to girls nearly his own age, who thought it great fun and giggled in his face. All this must he do, nor must he slight a single convention. No rules of conduct are so rigid as are those of a provincial town. He who ministers to the people must learn their prejudices and be adroit enough not to offend them or strong enough to break them down. It was a great load to lay on the shoulders of so young a man. But habit is everything, and he soon fell into the ways of his office. Writing to Taylor, he said, "I am fairly harnessed now, and at work, and, although the pulling is somewhat hard, I know my way. It is wonderful how soon a man falls into the cant of his position and learns to dole out the cut-and-dried phrases of ministerial talk like a sort of spiritual phonograph. I must confess, though, that I am rather good friends with the children who come to my Sunday-school. My own experiences as a child are so fresh in my memory that I rather sympathize with the little fellows, and do all I can to relieve the half-scared stiffness with which they conduct themselves in church and the Sunday-school room.

"I wonder why it is we make church such a place of terror to the young ones. No wonder they quit coming as soon as they can choose.

"I shock Miss Simpson, who teaches a mixed class, terribly, by my freedom with the pupils. She says that she can't do anything with her charges any more; but I notice that her class and the school are growing. I've been at it for several weeks now, and, like a promising baby, I am beginning to take an interest in things.

"If I got on with the old children of my flock as well as I do with the young ones, I should have nothing to complain of; but I don't. They know as little as the youngsters, and are a deal more unruly. They are continually comparing me with their old pastor, and it is needless to say that I suffer by the comparison. The ex-pastor himself burdens me with advice. I shall tell him some day that he has resigned. But I am growing diplomatic, and have several reasons for not wishing to offend him. For all which 'shop' pray forgive me."

One of the reasons of which Brent wrote was, as may be readily inferred, his engagement to Elizabeth. It had not yet officially become

public property, but few of Dexter's observant and forecasting people who saw them together doubted for a moment that it would be a match. Indeed, some spiteful people in the community, who looked on from the outside, said that "Mr. Simpson never thought of resigning until he saw that he could keep the place in the family." But of course they were Baptists who said this, or Episcopalians, or Presbyterians,—some such unregenerate lot.

Contrary to the adage, the course of love between the young people did run smooth. The young minister had not disagreed with the older one, so Elizabeth had not disagreed with him, because she did not have to take sides. She was active in the Sunday-school and among the young people's societies, and Brent thought that she would make an ideal minister's wife. Every Sunday, after church, they walked home together, and sometimes he would stop at the house for a meal. They had agreed that at the end of his first pastoral year they would be married; and both parent and guardian smiled on the prospective union.

As his beloved young friend seemed to grow more settled and contented, Eliphalet Hodges waxed more buoyant in the joy of his hale old age, and his wife, all her ambitions satisfied, grew more primly genial every day.

Brent found his congregation increasing, and heard himself spoken of as a popular preacher. Under these circumstances, it would seem that there was nothing to be desired to make him happy. But he was not so, though he kept an unruffled countenance. He felt the repression that his position put upon him. He prayed that with time it might pass off, but this prayer was not answered. There were times when, within his secret closet, the contemplation of the dead level of his life, as it spread out before him, drove him almost to madness.

The bitterness in his heart against his father had not abated one jot, and whenever these spasms of discontent would seize him he was wont to tell himself, "I am fighting old Tom Brent now, and I must conquer him."

Thus nearly a year passed away, and he was beginning to think of asking Elizabeth to name the day. He had his eye upon a pretty little nest of a house, sufficiently remote from her father's, and he was looking forward to settling quietly down in a home of his own.

It was about this time that, as he sat alone one evening in the little chamber which was his study and bedroom in one, Mr. Simpson entered and opened conversation with him.

For some time a rumor which did violence to the good name of Sophy Davis had been filtering through the community. But it had only filtered, until the girl's disappearance a day or two before had allowed the gossips to talk openly, and great was the talk. The young minister had looked on and listened in silence. He had always known and liked Sophy, and, if what the gossips said of her was true, he pitied the girl.

On this particular evening it was plain that Mr. Simpson had come to talk about the affair. After some preliminary remarks, he said, "You have a great chance, dear Brother Brent, for giving the devil in this particular part of the moral vineyard a hard blow."

"I don't clearly see why now, more than before," returned Brent.

"Because you are furnished with a living example of the fruits of evil; don't you see?"

"If there is such an example furnished, the people will see it for themselves, and I should be doing a thankless task to point it out to them. I would rather show people the beauty of good than the ugliness of evil."

"Yes, that's the milk-and-water new style of preaching."

"Well, we all have our opinions, to be sure, but I think it rather a good style." Brent was provokingly nonchalant, and his attitude irritated the elder man.

"We won't discuss that: we will be practical. I came to advise you to hold Sophy Davis up in church next Sunday as a fearful example of evil-doing. You needn't mention any names, but you can make it strong and plain enough."

Brent flushed angrily. "Are there not enough texts in here," he asked, laying his hand upon the Bible, "that I can cite and apply, without holding up a poor weak mortal to the curiosity, scorn, and derision of her equally weak fellows?"

"But it is your duty as a Christian and a preacher of the gospel to use this warning."

"I do not need to kick a falling girl to find examples to warn people from sin; and as for duty, I think that each man best knows his own."

"Then you aren't going to do it?"

"No," the young man burst forth. "I am a preacher of the gospel, not a clerical gossip."

"Do you mean that I am a gossip?"

"I was not thinking of you."

"Let me preach for you Sunday."

"I will not do that, either. I will not let my pulpit be debased by anything which I consider so low as this business."

"You will not take advice, then?"

"Not such as that."

"Be careful, Frederick Brent. I gave you that pulpit, and I can take it away,—I that know who you are and what you come from."

"The whole town knows what you know, so I do not care for that. As for taking my pulpit from me, you may do that when you please. You put it upon me by force, and by force you may take it; but while I am pastor there I shall use my discretion in all matters of this kind."

"Sophy's been mighty quiet in her devilment. She doesn't accuse anybody. Maybe you've got more than one reason for shielding her."

Brent looked into the man's eyes and read his meaning; then he arose abruptly and opened the door.

"I'm not accusing——"

"Go," said the young man, hoarsely. His face was white, and his teeth were hard set.

"You'll learn some respect for your elders yet, if——"

"Go!" Brent repeated, and he took a step towards his visitor. Mr. Simpson looked startled for a moment, but he glanced back into the young man's face and then passed hurriedly out of the room.

Brent let two words slip between his clinched teeth : " The hound ! "

No one knew what had passed between the young pastor and Mr. Simpson, but many mutterings and head-shakings of the latter indicated that all was not right. No one knew ? Perhaps that is hardly correct, for on Sunday, the sermon over, when Brent looked to find Elizabeth in her usual place whence they walked home together, she was gone. He bit his lip and passed on alone, but it rankled within him that she had so easily believed ill of him.

But he had not seen the last of the Rev. Mr. Simpson's work. It was the right of five members of the congregation to call a church-meeting, and when he returned for service in the evening he found upon the pulpit the written request for such an assembly to be held on Tuesday night. Heading the list of members was the name of the former pastor, although this was not needed to tell the young man that it was his work. In anger he gave out the notice and went on with his duties.

" Somethin' must 'a' riled you to-night, Fred," said Eliphalet when church was out. " You give 'em a mighty stirrin' touch o' fire. It 'minded me o' that old supply sermon." Brent smiled mirthlessly. He knew that the same feelings had inspired both efforts.

On Tuesday evening he was early at church, and in the chair, as was the pastor's place. Early as he was, he did not much precede Mr. Simpson, who came in, followed by a coterie of his choicest spirits.

When the assembly had been duly called to order, Brent asked, " Will some one now please state the object of this meeting ? "

Mr. Simpson arose.

" Brothers and sisters," he said, " the object of this meeting is a very simple one. From the time that I began to preach in this church, twenty-five years ago, we had purity and cleanness in the pulpit and in the pew."

Brent's eyes were flashing. Eliphalet Hodges, who had thought that the extra session was for some routine business, pricked up his ears.

Simpson proceeded : " One in this flock has lately gone astray : she has fallen into evil ways——"

" Brother Simpson," interrupted Brent, his face drawn and hard with anger, " will you state the object of this meeting ? "

" If the pastor is not afraid to wait, he will see that that is what I am doing."

" Then you are bringing into the church matters that have no business here."

" We shall see about that. We intend to investigate and see why you refused to hold up as a warning one of the sinners of this connection. We propose to ask whom you were shielding,—a sinner in the pew, or a sinner in the pulpit as well. We propose——"

" Stop ! " The young man's voice broke out like the report of a rifle. " Stop, I say, or, as God sees me, here in His temple, at His very altar, I will do you violence. I speak to you not as your pastor, but as a man ; not as an accused man, for you dare not accuse me."

The church was in a commotion. In all its long history, such a

scene had never before been enacted within the sacred walls. The men sat speechless; the women shrank far down into their seats. Only those two men, the young and the old, stood glaring into each other's faces.

"Remember, brethren," said some one, recovering himself, "that this is the house of God, and that you are preachers of the gospel."

"I do remember that it is God's house, and for that reason I will not let it be disgraced by scandal that would stain the lowest abode of vice. I do remember that I am a preacher, and for that reason I will not see the gospel made vindictive,—a scourge to whip down a poor girl, who may have sinned,—I know not,—but who, if she did, has an advocate with God. Once before in this place have I told you my opinion of your charity and your love. Once before have I branded you as mockeries of the idea of Christianity. Now I say to you, you are hypocrites. You are like carrion birds who soar high up in the ether for a while and then swoop down to revel in filth and rottenness. The stench of death is sweet to you. Putridity is dear to you. As for you who have done this work, you need pity. Your own soul must be reeking with secret foulness to be so basely suspicious. Your own eyes must have cast unholy glances to so soon accuse the eyes of others. As for the thing which you, mine enemy, have intimated here to-night, as pastor of this church I scorn to make defence. But as a man I say, give such words as those breath again, and I will forget your age and only remember your infamy. I see the heads of some about me here wagging, some that knew my father. I hear their muffled whispers, and I know what they are saying. I know what is in their hearts. You are saying that it is the old Tom Brent in me showing itself at last. Yes, it has smouldered in me long, and I am glad. I think better of that spirit because it was waked into life to resent meanness. I would rather be the most roistering drunkard that ever reeled down these streets than call myself a Christian and carouse over the dead characters of my fellows.

"To-night I feel for the first time that I am myself. I give you back gladly what you have given me. I am no longer your pastor. We are well quit. Even while I have preached to you, I have seen in your hearts your scorn and your distrust, and I have hated you in secret. But I throw off the cloak. I remove the disguise. Here I stand stripped of everything save the fact that I am a man; and I despise you openly. Yes, old Tom, drunken Tom Brent's son despises you. Go home. Go home. There may be work for your stench-loving nostrils there."

He stood like an avenging spirit, pointing towards the door, and the people who had sat there breathless through it all rose quietly and slipped out. Simpson joined them and melted into the crowd. They were awed and hushed.

Only Mrs. Hodges, white as death, and her husband, bowed with grief, remained. A silent party, they walked home together. Not until they were in the house did the woman break down, and then she burst into a storm of passionate weeping as if the pent-up tears of all her stoical life were flowing at once.

"Oh, Fred, Fred," she cried between her sobs, "I see it all now.

I was wrong. I was wrong. But I did it all fur the best. The Lord knows I did it fur the best."

"I know you did, Aunt Hester, but I wish you could have seen sooner, before the bitterness of death had come into my life." He felt strangely hard and cold. Her grief did not affect him then.

"Don't take on so, Hester," said the old man, but the woman continued to rock herself to and fro and moan, "I did it fur the best, I did it fur the best." The old man took her in his arms, and after a while she grew more calm, only her sobs breaking the silence.

"I shall go away to-morrow," said Brent. "I am going out into the world for myself. I've been a disgrace to every one connected with me."

"Don't say that about yoreself, Fred; I ain't a-goin' to hear it," said Eliphalet. "You've jest acted as any right-thinkin' man would 'a' acted. It wouldn't 'a' been right fur you to 'a' struck Brother Simpson, but I'm nearer his age, an' my hands itched to git a hold o' him." The old man looked menacing, and his fist involuntarily clinched.

"Liphalet," said his wife, "I've been a-meddlin' with the business o' Providence, an' I've got my jest deserts. I thought I knowed jest what He wanted me to do, an' I was more ignorant than a child. Furgive me ef you kin, Fred, my boy. I was tryin' to make a good man o' you."

"There's nothing for me to forgive, Aunt Hester. I'm sorry I've spoiled your plans."

"I'm glad, fur mebbe God'll have a chance now to work His own plans. But pore little 'Lizabeth!"

Brent's heart hurt him as he heard the familiar name, and he turned abruptly and went to his room. Once there, he had it out with himself. "But," he told himself, "if I had the emergency to meet again, I should do the same thing."

The next morning's mail brought him a little packet in which lay the ring he had given Elizabeth to plight their troth.

"I thank you for this," he said. "It makes my way easier."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE story of the altercation between the young minister and a part of his congregation was well bruited about the town, and all united in placing the fault heavily on the young man's shoulders. As for him, he did not care. He was wild with the enjoyment of his new-found freedom. Only now and again, as he sat at the table the morning after, and looked into the sad faces of Eliphalet and his guardian, did he feel any sorrow at the turn matters had taken.

In regard to Elizabeth, he felt only relief. It was as if a half-defined idea in his mind had been suddenly realized. For some time he had believed her unable either to understand him or to sympathize with his motives. He had begun to doubt the depth of his own feeling

for her. Then had come her treatment of him last Sunday, and somehow, while he knew it was at her father's behest, he could not help despising her weakness.

He had spent much of the night before in packing his effects, and all was now ready for his departure as they sat at breakfast. Mrs. Hodges was unusually silent, and her haggard face and swollen eyes told how she had passed the night. All in a single hour she had seen the work of the best part of her life made as naught, and she was bowed with grief and defeat. Frederick Brent's career had really been her dream. She had scarcely admitted, even to herself, how deeply his success affected her own happiness. She cared for him in much the same way that a sculptor loves his statue. Her attitude was that of one who says, "Look upon this work; is it not fair? I made it myself." It was as much her pride as it was her love that was hurt, because her love had been created by her pride. She had been prepared to say, exultingly, "Look where he came from, and look where he is," and now his defection deprived her forever of that sweet privilege. People had questioned her ability to train up a boy rightly, and she had wished to refute their imputations, by making that boy the wonder of the community and their spiritual leader; and just as she had deemed her work safely done, lo, it had come toppling about her ears. Even if the fall had come sooner, she would have felt it less. It was the more terrible because so unexpected, for she had laid aside all her fears and misgivings and felt secure in her achievement.

"You ain't a-eatin' nothin', Hester," said her husband, anxiously. "I hope you ain't a-feelin' bad this mornin'." He had heard her sobbing all night long, and the strength and endurance of her grief frightened him and made him uneasy, for she had always been so stoical. "Hadn't you better try an' eat one o' them buckwheat cakes? Put lots o' butter an' molasses on it: they're mighty good."

"Ef they're so good, why don't you eat yoreself?" You been foolin' with a half a one for the last ten minutes." Indeed, the old man's food did seem to stick in his throat, and once in a while a mist would come up before his eyes. He too had had his dreams, and one of them was of many a happy evening spent with his beloved boy, who should be near him, a joy and comfort in the evening of his life; and now he was going away.

The old man took a deep gulp at his coffee to hide his emotion. It burned his mouth and gave reason for the moisture in his eye when he looked up at Fred.

"What train air you goin' to take, Fred?" he asked.

"I think I'll catch that eight-fifty flier. It's the best I can get, you know, and vestibuled through, too."

"You have jest finally made up yore mind to go, have you?"

"Nothing could turn me from it now, Uncle 'Liph."

"It seems like a shame. You 'ain't got nothin' to do down in Cincinnati."

"I'll find something before long. I am going to spend the first few days just in getting used to being free." The next moment he was sorry that he had said it, for he saw his guardian's eyes fill.

"I am sorry, Frederick," she said, with some return to her old asperity, "I am sorry that I've made your life so hard that you think that you have been a slave. I am sorry that my home has been so onpleasant that you're so powerful glad to git away from it, even to go into a strange city full of wickedness an' sin."

"I didn't mean it that way, Aunt Hester. You've been as good as you could be to me. You have done your duty by me, if any one ever could."

"Well, I am mighty glad you realize that, so's ef you go away an' fall into sinful ways you can't lay none of it to my bringin'-up."

"I feel somehow as if I would like to have a go with sin some time, to see what it is like."

"Well, I lay you'll be satisfied before you've been in Cincinnati long, for ef there ever was livin' hells on airth, it's them big cities."

"Oh, I have got faith to believe that Fred ain't a-goin' to do nothin' wrong," said Eliphalet.

"Nobody don't know what nobody's a-goin' to do under temptation sich as is layin' in wait fur young men in the city, but I'm shore I've done my best to train you right, even ef I have made some mistakes in my poor weak way an' manner."

"If I do fall into sinful ways, Aunt Hester, I shall never blame you or your training for it."

"But you ain't a-goin' to do it, Fred; you ain't a-goin' to fall into no evil ways."

"I don't know, Uncle 'Liph. I never felt my weakness more than I do now."

"Then that very feelin' will be your stren'th, my boy. Keep on feelin' that way."

"It'll not be a stren'th in Cincinnati, not by no means. There is too many snares an' pitfalls there to entrap the weak," Mrs. Hodges insisted.

It is one of the defects of the provincial mind that it can never see any good in a great city. It concludes that, as many people are wicked, where large numbers of human beings are gathered together there must be a much greater amount of evil than in a smaller place. It overlooks the equally obvious reasoning that, as some people are good, in the larger mass there must be also a larger amount of goodness. It seems a source of complacent satisfaction to many to sit in contemplation of the fact of the extreme wickedness of the world. They are like children who delight in a "bluggy" story,—who gloat over murder and rapine.

Brent, however, was in no wise daunted by the picture of evil which his guardian painted for him, and as soon as breakfast was over he got his things in hand ready to start. Buoyant as he was with his new freedom, this was a hard moment for him. Despite the severity of his youthful treatment in Dexter, the place held all the tender recollections he had, and the room where he stood was the scene of some memories that now flooded his mind and choked his utterance when he strove to say good-by. He had thought that he should do it with such a fine grace. He would prove such a strong man. But he found his eyes

suffused with tears as he held his old guardian's hand, for, in spite of all, she had done the best for him that she knew, and she had taken a hard, uncompromising pride in him.

"I hope you'll git along all right, Frederick," she faltered forth tearfully. "Keep out of bad company, an' let us hear from you whenever you can. The Lord knows I've tried to do my dooty by you."

Poor Eliphalet tried to say something as he shook the young man's hand, but he broke down and wept like a child. The boy could not realize what a deal of sunshine he was taking out of the old man's life.

"I'll write to you as soon as I am settled," he told them, and with a husky farewell hurried away from the painful scene. At the gate the old couple stood and watched him go swinging down the street towards the station. Then they went into the house, and sat long in silence in the room he had so lately left. The breakfast-table, with all that was on it, was left standing unnoticed and neglected, a thing unprecedented in Mrs. Hodges's orderly household.

Finally her husband broke the silence. "It 'pears as if we had jest buried some one and come home from the funeral."

"An' that's jest what we have done, ef we only knowed it, 'Liphalet. We've buried the last of the Fred Brent we knowed an' raised. Even ef we ever see him ag'in, he'll never be the same to us. He'll have new friends to think of an' new notions in his head."

"Don't say that, Hester; don't say that. I can't stand it. He is never goin' to forgit you an' me, an' it hurts me to hear you talk like that."

"It don't soun' none too pleasant for me, 'Liphalet, but I've learned to face the truth, an' that's the truth, ef it ever was told."

"Well, mebbe it's for the best, then. It'll draw us closer together and make us more to each other as we journey down to the end. It's our evenin', Hester, an' we must expect some chilly winds 'long towards night, but I guess He knows best." He reached over and took his wife's hand tenderly in his, and so they sat on sadly, but gathering peace in the silence and the sympathy, until far into the morning.

Meanwhile the eight-fifty "flier" was speeding through the beautiful Ohio Valley, bearing the young minister away from the town of his birth. Out of sight of the grief of his friends, he had regained all his usual stolid self-possession, though his mind often went back to the little cottage at Dexter where the two old people sat, and he may be forgiven if his memory lingered longer over the image of the man than of the woman. He remembered with a thrill at his heart what Eliphalet Hodges had been to him in the dark days of his youth, and he confessed to himself with a half shame that his greatest regret was in leaving him.

The feeling with which he had bidden his guardian good-by was one not of regret at his own loss, but of pity for her distress. To Elizabeth his mind only turned for a moment to dismiss her with a mild contempt. Something hard that had always been in his nature seemed to have suddenly manifested itself.

"It is so much better this way," he said, "for if the awakening had come later we should have been miserable together." And then his thoughts went forward to the new scenes towards which he was speeding.

He had never been to Cincinnati. Indeed, except on picnic days, he had scarcely ever been outside of Dexter. But Cincinnati was the great city of his State, the one towards which adventurous youth turned its steps when real life was to be begun. He dreaded and yet longed to be there; and his heart was in a turmoil of conflicting emotion as he watched the landscape flit by.

It was a clear August day. Nature was trembling and fainting in the ecstasies of sensuous heat. Beside the railway the trenches which in spring were gurgling brooks were now dry and brown, and the reeds which had bent forward to kiss the water now leaned over from very weakness, dusty and sickly. The fields were ripening to the harvest. There was in the air the smell of fresh-cut hay. The corn-stalks stood like a host armed with brazen swords to resist the onslaught of that other force whose weapon was the corn-knife. Farther on, between the trees, the much depleted river sparkled in the sun and wound its way, now near, now away from the road, a glittering dragon in an enchanted wood.

Such scenes as these occupied the young man's mind, until, amid the shouts of brakemen, the vociferous solicitations of the baggage-man, and a general air of bustle and preparation, the train thundered into the Grand Central Station. Something seized Brent's heart like a great compressing hand. He was frightened for an instant, and then he was whirled out with the rest of the crowd, up the platform, through the thronged waiting-room, into the street.

Then the cries of the eager men outside of "Cab, sir? cab, sir?" "Let me take your baggage," and "Which way, sir?" bewildered him. He did the thing which every provincial does: he went to a policeman and inquired of him where he might find a respectable boarding-house. The policeman did not know, but informed him that there were plenty of hotels farther up. With something like disgust, Brent wondered if all the hotels were like those he saw at the station, where the guests had to go through the bar-room to reach their chambers. He shuddered at it; so strong is the influence of habit. But he did not wish to go to a hotel: so, carrying his two valises, he trudged on, though the hot sun of the mid-afternoon beat mercilessly down upon him. He kept looking into the faces of people who passed him, in the hope that he might see in one encouragement to ask for the information he so much wanted; but one and all they hurried by without even so much as a glance at the dusty traveller. Had one of them looked at him, he would merely have said, mentally, "Some country bumpkin come in to see the sights of town and be buncoed."

There is no loneliness like the loneliness of the unknown man in a crowd. A feeling of desolation took hold upon Brent, so he turned down a side-street in order to be more out of the main line of business. It was a fairly respectable quarter; children were playing about the pavements and in the gutters, while others with pails and pitchers

were going to and from the corner saloon, where their vessels were filled with foaming beer. Brent wondered at the cruelty of parents who thus put their children in the way of temptation, and looked to see if the little ones were not bowed with shame; but they all strode stolidly on, with what he deemed an unaccountable indifference to their own degradation. He passed one place where the people were drinking in the front yard, and saw a mother holding a glass of beer to her little one's lips. He could now understand the attitude of the children, but the fact, nevertheless, surprised and sickened him.

Finally, the sign "Boarding Here" caught his eye. He went into the yard and knocked at the door. A plump German girl opened it, and, to his question as to accommodation, replied that she would see her mistress. He was ushered into a little parlor that boasted some shabby attempts at finery, and was soon joined by a woman whom he took to be the "lady of the house."

Yes, Mrs. Jones took boarders. Would he want room and board? Terms five dollars per week. Had he work in the city? No? Well, from gentlemen who were out of work she always had her money in advance. But would he see his room first?

Wondering much at Mrs. Jones's strange business arrangement, Brent allowed her to conduct him to a room on the second floor, which looked out on the noisy street. It was not a palatial place by any means, but was not uncomfortable save for the heat, which might be expected anywhere on such a day. He was tired and wanted rest, so he engaged the place and paid the woman then and there.

"You just come off the train, I see. Will you have luncheon at once, Mr. —?"

"Brent," said he. "Yes, I will have some luncheon, if you please."

"Do you take beer with your luncheon?"

"No-o," he said, hesitating; and yet why should he not take beer? Everybody else did, even the children. Then he blushed as he thought of what his aunt Hester would think of his even hesitating over the question. She would have shot out a "no" as if it were an insult to be asked. So without beer he ate his luncheon and lay down to rest for the afternoon. When one has travelled little, even a short journey is fatiguing.

In the evening Brent met some of the other boarders at supper; there were not many. They were principally clerks in shops or under-bookkeepers. One genial young fellow struck up a conversation with Fred, and became quite friendly during the evening.

"I guess you will go out to the 'Zoo' to-morrow, won't you? That is about the first place that visitors usually strike for when they come here."

"I thought of getting a general idea of the city first, so that I could go round better before going farther out."

"Oh, you won't have any trouble in getting around. Just ask folks, and they will direct you anywhere."

"But everybody seems to be in a hurry; and by the time I open my mouth to ask them, they have passed me."

The young clerk, Mr. Perkins by name, thought this was a great joke, and laughed long and loudly at it.

"I wish to gracious I could go around with you. I have been so busy ever since I have been here that I have never seen any of the show sights myself. But I tell you what I will do: I can steer you around some on Thursday night. That is my night off, and then I will show you some sights that are sights." The young man chuckled as he got his hat and prepared to return to the shop. Brent thanked him in a way that sounded heavy and stilted even to his own ears after the other's light pleasantry.

"And another thing," said Perkins, "we will go to see the baseball game on Sunday, Cleveland's and the Reds,—great game, you know." It was well that Mr. Perkins was half-way out of the door before he finished his sentence, for there was no telling what effect upon him the flush which mounted to Brent's face and the horror in his eyes would have had.

Go to a baseball game on Sunday! What would his people think of such a thing? How would he himself feel there,—he, notwithstanding his renunciation of office, a minister of the gospel? He hastened to his room, where he could be alone and think. The city indeed was full of temptations to the young. And yet he knew he would be ashamed to tell his convictions to Perkins, or to explain his horror at the proposition. Again there came to him, as there had come many times before, the realization that he was out of accord with his fellows. He was not in step with the procession. He had been warped away from the parallel of every-day, ordinary humanity. In order to still the tumult in his breast, he took his hat and wandered out upon the street. He wanted to see people, to come into contact with them and so rub off some of the strangeness in which their characters appeared to him.

The streets were all alight and alive with bustle. Here a fakir with loud voice and market-place eloquence was vending his shoddy wares; there a drunkard reeled or was kicked from the door of a saloon, whose noiselessly swinging portals closed for an instant, only to be reopened to admit another victim, who ere long would be treated likewise. A quartet of young negroes were singing on the pavement in front of a house as he passed and catching the few pennies and nickels that were flung to them from the door. A young girl smiled and beckoned to him from a window, and another who passed laughed saucily up into his face and cried, "Ah, there!" Everywhere was the inevitable pail flashing to and fro. Sickened, disgusted, thrown back upon himself, Brent turned his steps homeward again. Was this the humanity he wanted to know? Was this the evil which he wanted to have a go with? Was Aunt Hester, after all, in the right, and was her way the best? His heart was torn by a multitude of conflicting emotions. He had wondered, in one of his rebellious moods, if, when he was perfectly untrammelled, he would ever pray; but on this night of nights, before he went wearily to bed, he remained long upon his knees.

CHAPTER XV.

BRENT found himself in a most peculiar situation. He had hated the severe discipline of his youth, and had finally rebelled against it and renounced its results as far as they went materially. This he had thought to mean his emancipation. But when the hour to assert his freedom had come, he found that the long years of rigid training had bound his volition with iron bands. He was wrapped in a mantle of habit which he was ashamed to display and yet could not shake off. The pendulum never stops swinging in the middle of the arc. So he would have gone to the other extreme and revelled in the pleasures whose very breath had been forbidden to his youth; but he found his sensibilities revolting from everything that did not accord with the old Puritan code by which they had been trained. He knew himself to be full of capabilities for evil, but it seemed as if some power greater than his held him back. It was Frederick Brent who looked on sin abstractly, but its presence in the concrete was seen through the eyes of Mrs. Hester Hodges. It could hardly be called the decree of conscience, because so instantaneous was the rejection of evil that there was really no time for reference to the internal monitor. The very restriction which he had complained of he was now putting upon himself. The very yoke whose burden he hated he was placing about his own neck. He had run away from the sound of "right" and "duty," but had not escaped their power. He felt galled, humiliated, and angry with himself, because he had long seen the futility of blind indignation against the unseen force which impelled him forward in a hated path.

One thing that distressed him was a haunting fear of the sights which Perkins would show him on the morrow's night. He had seen enough for himself to conjecture of what nature they would be. He did not want to see more, and yet how could he avoid it? He might plead illness, but that would be a lie; and then there would be other nights to follow, so it would only be a postponement of what must ultimately take place or be boldly rejected. Once he decided to explain his feelings on the subject, but in his mind's eye he saw the half-pitying sneer on the face of the worldly young cityite, and he quailed before it.

Why not go? Could what he saw hurt him? Was he so great a coward that he dared not come into the way of temptation? We do not know the strength of a shield until it has been tried in battle. Metal does not ring true until it is struck. He would go. He would see with his own eyes for the purpose of information. He would have his boasted bout with sin. After this highly valorous conclusion he fell asleep.

The next morning found him wavering again, but he put all his troubled thoughts away and spent the day in sight-seeing. He came in at night tired and feeling strange and lonesome. "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad," we used to say; but all that is changed now, and whom the devil wishes to get, he first makes lonesome. Then the victim is up to anything.

Brent had finished his supper when Perkins came in, but he brightened at the young clerk's cheery salute, "Hello, there! ready to go, are you?"

"Been ready all day," he replied, with a laugh. "It's been pretty slow."

"Ain't made much out, then, seeing the sights of this little village of ours? Well, we'll do better to-night, if the people don't see that black tie of yours and take you for a preacher getting facts for a crusade."

Brent blushed and bit his lip, but he only said, "I'll go up and change it while you're finishing your supper."

"Guess you'd better, or some one will be asking you for a sermon." Perkins laughed good-naturedly, but he did not know how his words went home to his companion's sensitive feelings. He thought that his haste in leaving the room and his evident confusion were only the results of a greenhorn's embarrassment under raillery. He really had no idea that his comrade's tie was the badge of his despised calling.

Brent was down again in a few minutes, a gray cravat having superseded the offending black. But even now, as he compared himself with his guide, he appeared sombre and ascetic. His black Prince Albert coat showed up gloomy and oppressive against young Perkins's natty drab cutaway relieved by a dashing red tie. From head to foot the little clerk was light and dapper; and as they moved along the crowded streets the preacher felt much as a conscious omnibus would feel beside a pneumatic-tired sulky.

"You can talk all you want to about your Chicago," Perkins was rattling on, "but you can bet your life Cincinnati's the greatest town in the West. Chicago's nothing but a big overgrown country town. Everything looks new and flimsy there to a fellow, but here you get something that's solid. Chicago's pretty swift, too, but there ain't no flies on us, either, when it comes to the go."

Brent thought with dismay how much his companion knew, and felt a passing bitterness that he, though older, had seen none of these things.

"Ever been in Chicago?" asked Perkins; "but of course you haven't." This was uttered in such a tone of conviction that the minister thought his greenness must be very apparent.

"I've never been around much of anywhere," he said. "I've been hard at work all my life."

"Eh, that so? You don't look like you'd done much hard work. What do you do?"

"I—I—ah—write," was the confused answer.

Perkins, fortunately, did not notice the confusion. "Oh, ho!" he said: "do you go in for newspaper work?"

"No, not for newspapers."

"Oh, you're an author, a regular out-and-outer. Well, don't you know, I thought you were somehow different from most fellows I've met. I never could see how you authors could stay away in small towns, where you hardly ever see any one, and write about people as you do; but I suppose you get your people from books."

"No, not entirely," replied Brent, letting the mistake go. "There are plenty of interesting characters in a small town. Its life is just what the life of a larger city is, only the scale is smaller."

"Well, if you're on a search for characters, you'll see some to-night that'll be worth putting in your note-book. We'll stop here first."

The place before which they had stopped was surrounded by a high vine-covered lattice fence: over the entrance flamed forth in letters set with electric lights the words "Meyer's Beer-Garden and Variety Hall. Welcome." He could hear the sound of music within, —a miserable orchestra, and a woman singing in a high strident voice. People were passing in and out of the place. He hesitated, and then, shaking himself, as if to shake off his scruples, turned towards the entrance. As he reached the door, a man who was standing beside it thrust a paper into his hand. He saw others refuse to take it as they passed. It was only the announcement of a temperance meeting at a neighboring hall. He raised his eyes to find the gaze of the man riveted upon him.

"Don't you go in there, young man," he said. "You don't look like you was used to this life. Come away. Remember, it's the first step——"

"Chuck him," said Perkins's voice at his elbow. But something in the man's face held him. A happy thought struck him. He turned to his companion and said, in a low voice, "I think I've found a character here already. Will you excuse me for a while?"

"Certainly. Business before pleasure. Pump him all you can, and then come in. You'll find me at one of the tables on the farther side." Perkins passed on.

"You won't go in, my young friend?" said the temperance man.

"What is it to you whether I go in or stay out?" asked Brent, in a tone of assumed carelessness.

"I want to keep every man I kin from walkin' the path that I walked and sufferin' as I suffer." He was seized with a fit of coughing. His face was old and very thin, and his hands, even in that hot air, were blue as with cold. "I wisht you'd go to our meetin' to-night. We've got a powerful speaker there, that'll show you the evils of drink better'n I kin."

"Where is this great meeting?" Brent tried to put a sneer into his voice, but an unaccountable tremor ruined its effect.

He was duly directed to the hall. "I may come around," he said, carelessly, and sauntered off, leaving the man coughing beside the door of the beer-garden. "Given all of his life to the devil," he mused, "drunk himself to death, and now seeking to steal into heaven by giving away a few tracts in his last worthless moments." He had forgotten all about Perkins.

He strolled about for a while, and then, actuated by curiosity, sought out the hall where the meeting was being held. It was a rude place, in a poor neighborhood. The meeting-room was up two flights of dingy, rickety stairs. Hither Brent found his way. His acquaintance of the street was there before him and sitting far to the front among those whom, by their position, the young man took to be the speakers of the

evening. The room was half full of the motleyest crew that it had ever been his ill fortune to set eyes on. The flaring light of two lard-oil torches brought out the peculiarities of the queer crowd in fantastic prominence. There was everywhere an odor of work, but it did not hang chiefly about the men. The women were mostly little weazen-faced creatures, whom labor and ill treatment had rendered inexpressibly hideous. The men were chiefly of the reformed. The bleared eyes and bloated faces of some showed that their reformation must have been of very recent occurrence, while a certain unsteadiness in the conduct of others showed that with them the process had not taken place at all.

It was late, and a stuffy little man with a wheezy voice and a very red nose was holding forth on the evils of intemperance, very much to his own satisfaction evidently, and unmistakably to the weariness of his audience. Brent was glad when he sat down. Then there followed experiences from women whose husbands had been drunkards and from husbands whose wives had been similarly afflicted. It was all thoroughly uninteresting and commonplace.

The young man had closed his eyes, and, suppressing a yawn, had just determined to go home, when he was roused by a new stir in the meeting and the voice of the wheezy man saying, "And now, brothers, we are to have a great treat: we are to hear the story of the California Pilgrim, told by himself. Bless the Lord for his testimony! Go on, my brother." Brent opened his eyes and took in the scene. Beside the chairman stood the emaciated form of his chance acquaintance. It was the man's face, now seen in the clearer light, that struck him. It was thin, very thin, and of deathly pallor. The long gray hair fell in a tumbled mass above the large hollow eyes. The cheek-bones stood up prominently, and seemed almost bursting through the skin. His whole countenance was full of the terrible, hopeless tragedy of a ruined life. He began to speak.

"I'll have to be very brief, brothers and sisters, as I haven't much breath to spare. But I will tell you my life simply, in order to warn any that may be in the same way to change their course. Twenty years ago I was a hard-workin' man in this State. I got along fairly, an' had enough to live on an' keep my wife an' baby decent. Of course I took my dram like the other workmen, an' it never hurt me. But some men can't stand what others can, an' the habit commenced to grow on me. I took a spree, now an' then, an' then went back to work, fur I was a good hand, an' could always git somethin' to do. After a while I got so unsteady that nobody would have me. From then on it was the old story. I got discouraged, an' drunk all the more. Three years after I begun, my home was a wreck, an' I had ill-treated my wife until she was no better than I was; then she got a divorce from me, an' I left the town. I wandered from place to place, sometimes workin', always drinkin'; sometimes ridin' on trains, sometimes trampin' by the roadside. Fin'ly I drifted out to Californy, an' there I spent most o' my time until, a year ago, I come to see myself what a miserable bein' I was. It was through one of your Bands of Hope. From then I pulled myself up; but it was too late. I had

ruined my health. I started for my old home, talkin' and tellin' my story by the way. I want to get back there an' jest let the people know that I've repented, an' then I can die in peace. I want to see ef my wife an' child——" Here a great fit of coughing seized him again, and he was forced to sit down.

Brent had listened breathlessly to every word: a terrible fear was clutching at his heart. When the man sat down, he heard the voice of the chairman saying, "Now let us all contribute what we can to help the brother on his journey; he hasn't far to go. Come forward and lay your contributions on the table here, now. Some one sing. Now who's going to help Brother Brent?"

The young man heard the name. He grasped the seat in front of him for support. He seized his hat, staggered to his feet, and stumbled blindly out of the room and down the stairs.

"Drunk," said some one as he passed.

He rushed into the street, crying within himself, "My God! my God!" He hurried through the crowds, thrusting the people right and left and unheeding the curses that followed him. He reached home and groped up to his room.

"Awful!" murmured Mrs. Jones. "He seemed such a good young man; but he's been out with Mr. Perkins, and men will be men."

Once in his room, it seemed that he would go mad. Back and forth he paced the floor, clinching his hands and smiting his head. He wanted to cry out. He felt the impulse to beat his head against the wall. "My God! my God! It was my father," he cried, "going back home. What shall I do?" There was yet no pity in his heart for the man whom he now knew to be his parent. His only thought was of the bitterness that parent's folly had caused. "Oh, why could he not have died away from home, without going back there to revive all the old memories? Why must he go back there just at this troublous time to distress those that have loved me and help those that hate me to drag my name in the dust? He has chosen his own way, and it has ever been apart from me. He has neglected and forgotten me. Now why does he seek me out, after a life spent among strangers? I do not want him. I will not see him again. I shall never go home. I have seen him, I have heard him talk. I have stood near him and talked with him, and just when I am leaving it all behind me, all my past of sorrow and degradation, he comes and lays a hand upon me, and I am more the son of Tom Brent to-night than ever before. Is it Fate, God, or the devil that pursues me so?"

His passion was spending itself. When he was more calm he thought, "He will go home with a religious testimony on his lips, he will die happy, and the man who has spent all his days in drunkenness, killed his wife, and damned his son will be preached through the gates of glory on the strength of a few words of familiar cant." There came into his mind a great contempt for the system which taught or preached so absurd and unfair a doctrine. "I wish I could go to the other side of the world," he said, "and live among heathens who know no such dreams. I, Frederick Brent, son of Tom Brent, temperance advocate,

sometime drunkard and wife-beater." There was terrible, scorching irony in the thought. There was a pitiless hatred in his heart for his father's very name.

"I suppose," he went on, "that Uncle 'Liph"—he said the name tenderly—"has my letter now and will be writing to me to come home and hear my father's dying words, and receive perhaps his dying blessing,—his dying blessing! But I will not go; I will not go back." Anger, mingled with shame at his origin and a greater shame at himself, flamed within him. "He did not care for the helpless son sixteen years ago; let him die without the sight of the son now. His life has cursed my life, his name has blasted my name, his blood has polluted my blood."

He dropped into a chair and struck the table with his clinched fists.

Mrs. Jones came to the door to ask him not to make so much noise. He buried his face in his hands, and sat there thinking, thinking, until morning.

CHAPTER XVI.

NEXT morning when Brent went down to breakfast he was as a man who had passed through an illness. His eyes were bloodshot, his face was pale, his step was nervous and weak.

"Just what I expected," muttered Mrs. Jones. "He was in a beastly condition last night. I shall speak to Mr. Perkins about it. He had no right to take and get him in such a state."

She was more incensed than ever when the gay young clerk came in looking perfectly fresh. "He's used to it," she told herself, "and it doesn't tell on him, but it's nearly killed that poor young man."

"Hullo there, Brent," said Perkins. "You chucked me for good last night. Did you lose your way, or was your 'character' too interesting?"

"Character too interesting," was the laconic reply.

"And I'll bet you've been awake all night studying it out."

"You are entirely right there," said Brent, smiling bitterly. "I haven't slept a wink all night: I've been studying out that character."

"I thought you looked like it. You ought to take some rest to-day."

"I can't. I've got to put in my time on the same subject."

Mrs. Jones pursed her lips and bustled among the teacups. The idea of their laughing over their escapades right before her face and thinking that she did not understand! She made the mental observation that all men were natural born liars, and most guilty when they appeared to be most innocent. "Character," indeed! Did they think to blind her to the true situation of things? Oh, astute woman!

"Strange fellow," said Perkins to his spoon, when, after a slight breakfast, Brent had left the table.

"There's others that are just as strange, only they think they're sharper," quoth Mrs. Jones, with a knowing look.

"I don't understand you," returned her boarder, turning his attention from his spoon to the lady's face.

"There's none so blind as those who don't want to see."

"Again I say, I don't understand you, Mrs. Jones."

"Oh, Mr. Perkins, it's no use trying to fool me. I know men. In my younger days I was married to a man."

"Strange contingency! But still it casts no light on your previous remarks."

"You've got very innocent eyes, I must say, Mr. Perkins."

"The eyes, madam, are the windows of the soul," Perkins quoted, with mock gravity.

"Well, if the eyes are the soul's windows, there are some people who always keep their windows curtained."

"But I must deny any such questionable performance on my part. I have not the shrewdness to veil my soul from the scrutiny of so keen an observer as yourself."

"Oh, flattery isn't going to do your cause one mite of good, Mr. Perkins. I'm not going to scold, but next time you get him in such a state I wish you'd bring him home yourself, and not let him come tearing in here like a madman, scaring a body half to death."

"Will you kindly explain yourself? What condition? And who is 'him'?"

"Oh, of course you don't know."

"I do not."

"Do you mean to tell me that you weren't out with Mr. Brent last night before he came home?"

"I assuredly was not with him after the first quarter of an hour."

"Well, it's hard to believe that he got that way by himself."

"That way! Why, he left me at the door of Meyer's beer-garden to talk to a temperance crank who he thought was a character."

"Well, no temperance character sent him rushing and stumbling in here as he did last night. 'Character,' indeed! It was at the bottom of a pail of beer or something worse."

"Oh, I don't think he was loaded. He's an author, and I guess his eye got to rolling in a fine frenzy, and he had to hurry home to keep it from rolling out of his head into the street."

"Mr. Perkins, this is no subject for fun. I have seen what I have seen, and it was a most disgraceful spectacle. I take your word for it that you were not with Mr. Brent, but you need not try to go further and defend him."

"I'm not trying to defend him at all; it's really none of my business." And Perkins went off to work, a little bit angry and a good deal more bewildered. "I thought he was a 'jay,'" he remarked.

To Brent the day was a miserable one. He did not leave his room, but spent the slow hours pacing back and forth in absorbed thought, interrupted now and then by vain attempts to read. His mind was in a state of despairing apprehension. It needed no prophetic sense to tell him what would happen. It was only a question of how long a time would elapse before he might expect to receive word from Dexter summoning him home. It all depended upon whether or not the

"California Pilgrim" got money enough last night for exploiting his disgraceful history to finish the last stage of the journey.

What disgusted the young man so intensely was that his father, after having led the life he had, should make capital out of relating it. Would not a quiet repentance, if it were real, have been quite sufficient? He very much distrusted the sincerity of motive that made a man hold himself up as an example of reformed depravity, when the hope of gain was behind it all. The very charity which he had preached so fiercely to his congregation he could not extend to his own father. Indeed, it appeared to him (although this may have been a trick of his distorted imagination) that the "Pilgrim" had seemed to take a sort of pleasure in the record of his past, as though it were excellent to be bad, in order to have the pleasure of conversion. His lip involuntarily curled when he thought of conversion. He was disgusted with all men and principles. One man offends, and a whole system suffers. He felt a peculiar self-consciousness, a self-glorification in his own misery. Placing the accumulated morality of his own life against the full-grown evil of his father's, it angered him to think that by the intervention of a seemingly slight quantity the results were made equal.

"What is the use of it all," he asked himself, "my struggle, involuntary though it was, my self-abnegation, my rigidity, when what little character I have built up is overshadowed by my father's past? Why should I have worked so hard and long for those rewards, real or fancied, the favor of God and the respect of men, when he, after a career of outrageous dissipation, by a simple act or claim of repentance wins the Deity's smile and is received into the arms of people with gushing favor, while I am looked upon as the natural recipient of all his evil? Of course they tell us that there is more joy over the one lamb that is found than over the ninety and nine that went not astray; it puts rather a high premium on straying." He laughed bitterly. "With what I have behind me, is it worth being decent for the sake of decency? After all, is the game worth the candle?"

He took up a little book which many times that morning he had been attempting to read. It was an edition of Matthew Arnold's poems, and one of the stanzas was marked. It was in "Mycerinus."

Oh, wherefore cheat our youth, if thus it be,
Of one short joy, one lust, one pleasant dream,
Stringing vain words of powers we cannot see,
Blind divinations of a will supreme?
Lost labor! when the circumambient gloom
But holds, if gods, gods careless of our doom!

He laid the book down with a sigh. It seemed to fit his case.

It was not until the next morning, however, that his anticipations were realized, and the telegraph messenger stopped at his door. The telegram was signed Eliphalet Hodges, and merely said, "Come at once. You are needed."

"Needed"! What could they "need" of him? "Wanted" would have been a better word,—“wanted” by the man who for sixteen years

had forgotten that he had a son. He had already decided that he would not go, and was for the moment sorry that he had stayed where the telegram could reach him and stir his mind again into turmoil; but the struggle had already recommenced. Maybe his father was burdening his good old friends, and it was they who "needed" him. Then it was his duty to go, but not for his father's sake. He would not even see his father. No, not that! He could not see him.

It ended by his getting his things together and taking the next train. He was going, he told himself, to the relief of his guardian and his friend, and not because his father—his father!—wanted him. Did he deceive himself? Were there not, at the bottom of it all, the natural promptings of so close a relationship which not even cruelty, neglect, and degradation could wholly stifle?

He saw none of the scenes that had charmed his heart on the outward journey a few days before; for now his sight was either far ahead or entirely inward. When he reached Dexter, it was as if years had passed since he left its smoky little station. Things did not look familiar to him as he went up the old street, because he saw them with new eyes.

Mr. Hodges must have been watching for him, for he opened the door before he reached it.

"Come in, Freddie," he said, in a low voice, tiptoeing back to his chair. "I've got great news fur you."

"You needn't tell me what it is," said Brent. "I know that my father is here."

Eliphalet started up. "Who told you?" he said; "some block-head, I'll be bound, who didn't break it to you gently as I would 'a' done. Actu'lly the people in this here town——"

"Don't blame the people, Uncle 'Liph," said the young man, smiling in spite of himself. "I found it out for myself before I arrived; and, I assure you, it wasn't gently broken to me, either." To the old man's look of bewildered amazement, Brent replied with the story of his meeting with his father.

"It's the good Lord's doin's," said Eliphalet, reverently.

"I don't know just whose doing it is, but it is an awful accusation to put on the Lord. I've still got enough respect for Him not to believe that."

"Freddie," exclaimed the old man, horror-stricken, "you ain't a-gittin' irreverent, you ain't a-beginnin' to doubt, air you? Don't do it. I know jest what you've had to bear all along, an' I know what you're a-bearin' now, but you ain't the only one that has their crosses. I'm a-bearin' my own, an' it ain't light, neither. You don't know what it is, my boy, when you feel that somethin' precious is all yore own, to have a real owner come in an' snatch it away from you. While I thought yore father was dead, you seemed like my own son; but now it 'pears like I 'ain't got no kind o' right to you, an' it's kind o' hard, Freddie, it's kind o' hard, after all these years. I know how a mother feels when she loses her baby, but when it's a grown son that's lost, one that she's jest been pilin' up love fur, it's—it's——" The old man paused, overcome by his emotions.

"I am as much—no, more than ever your son, Uncle 'Liph. No one shall ever come between us; no, not even the man I should call father."

"He is yore father, Freddie. It's jest like I told Hester. She was fur sendin' him along." In spite of himself, a pang shot through Brent's heart at this. "But I said, 'No, no, Hester, he's Fred's father, an' we must take him in, fur our boy's sake.'"

"Not for my sake, not for my sake!" broke out the young man.

"Well, then, fur our Master's sake. We took him in. He was mighty low down. It seemed like the Lord had jest spared him to git here. Hester's with him now, an'—an'—kin you stand to hear it?—the doctor says he's only got a little while to live."

"Oh, I can stand it," Brent replied, with unconscious irony. The devotion and the goodness of the old man had softened him as thought, struggle, and prayer had failed to do.

"Will you go in now?" asked Eliphalet. "He wants to see you: he can't die in peace without."

The breath came hard between his teeth as Brent replied, "I said I wouldn't see him. I came because I thought you needed me."

"He's yore father, Freddie, an' he's penitent. All of us pore mortals need a good deal o' furgivin', an' it doesn't matter ef one of us needs a little more or a little less than another: it puts us all on the same level. Remember yore sermon about charity, an'—an' jedge not. You 'ain't seen all o' His plan. Come on." And, taking the young man by the hand, he led him into the room that had been his own. Hester rose as he entered, and shook hands with him, and then she and her husband silently passed out.

The sufferer lay upon the bed, his eyes closed and his face as white as the pillows on which he reclined. Disease had fattened on the hollow cheeks and wasted chest. One weak hand picked aimlessly at the coverlet, and the labored breath caught and faltered as if already the hand of Death was at his throat.

The young man stood by the bed, trembling in every limb, his lips now as white as the ashen face before him. He was cold, but the perspiration stood in beads on his brow as he stood gazing upon the face of his father. Something like pity stirred him for a moment, but a vision of his own life came up before him, and his heart grew hard again. Here was the man who had wronged him irremediably.

Finally the dying man stirred uneasily, muttering, "I dreamed that he had come."

"I am here." Brent's voice sounded strange to him.

The eyes opened, and the sufferer gazed at him. "Are you——"

"I am your son."

"You—why, I—saw you——"

"You saw me in Cincinnati at the door of a beer-garden." He felt as if he had struck the man before him with a lash.

"Did—you—go in?"

"No: I went to your temperance meeting."

The elder Brent did not hear the ill-concealed bitterness in his son's voice. "Thank God," he said. "You heard—my—story, an'—"

it leaves me—less—to tell. Something—made me speak—to you that—night. Come nearer. Will—you—shake hands with—me?"

Fred reached over and took the clammy hand in his own.

"I have—had—a pore life," the now fast weakening man went on; "an' I have—done wrong—by—you, but I—have—repented. Will you forgive me?"

Something came up into Brent's heart and burned there like a flame.

"You have ruined my life," he answered, "and left me a heritage of shame and evil."

"I know it—God help me—I know it; but won't—you—forgive me, my son? I—want to—call you—that—just once." He pressed his hand closer.

Could he forgive him? Could he forget all that he had suffered and would yet suffer on this man's account? Then the words and the manner of old Eliphalet came to him, and he said, in a softened voice, "I forgive you, father." He hesitated long over the name.

"Thank God for—the name—an'—forgiveness." He carried his son's hand to his lips. "I shan't be—alive—long—now,—an' my—death—will set—people—to talkin'. They will—bring—up the—past. I—don't want you—to—stay an' have—to bear—it. I don't want to—bring any more on—you than I have—already. Go—away, as—soon as I am dead."

"I cannot leave my friends to bear my burdens."

"They will not speak—of them—as they—will speak of—you, my—poor—boy. You—are—old—Tom Brent's—son. I—wish I could take—my name—an' all—it means—along—with—me. But—promise—me—you—will—go. Promise——"

"I will go if you so wish it."

"Thank—you. An'—now—good-by. I—can't talk—any—more. I don't dare—to advise—you—after—all—you—know—of me; but do—right—do right."

The hand relaxed and the eyelids closed. Brent thought that he was dead, and, prompted by some impulse, bent down and kissed his father's brow,—his father, after all. A smile flitted over the pale face, but the eyes did not open. But he did not die then. Fred called Mrs. Hodges and left her with his father while he sat with Eliphalet. It was not until the next morning, when the air was full of sunlight, the song of birds, and the chime of church bells, that old Tom Brent's weary spirit passed out on its search for God. He had not spoken after his talk with his son.

There were heavy hearts about his bed, but there were no tears, no sorrow for his death,—only regret for the manner of his life.

Mrs. Hodges and Eliphalet agreed that the dead man had been right in wishing his son to go away, and, after doing what he could to lighten their load, he again stood on the threshold, leaving his old sad home. Mrs. Hodges bade him good-by at the door, and went back. She was too bowed to seem hard any more, or even to pretend it. But Eliphalet followed him to the gate. The two stood holding each other's hands and gazing into each other's eyes.

"I know you're a-goin' to do right without me a-tellin' you to," said the old man, chokingly. "That's all I want of you. Even ef you don't preach, you kin live an' work fur Him."

"I shall do all the good I can, Uncle 'Liph, but I shall do it in the name of poor humanity until I come nearer to Him. I am dazed and confused now, and want the truth."

"Go on, my boy; you're safe. You've got the truth now, only you don't know it; fur they's One that says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.'"

Another hearty hand-shake, and the young man was gone.

As Fred went down the street, some one accosted him and said, "I hear yore father's home."

"Yes, he's home," said Fred.

Tom Brent was buried on Tuesday morning. The Rev. Mr. Simpson, who, in spite of his age, had been prevailed upon to resume charge of his church, preached the sermon. He spoke feelingly of the "dear departed brother, who, though late, had found acceptance with the Lord," and he ended with a prayer—which was a shot—for the "departed's misguided son, who had rejected his Master's call and was now wandering over the earth in rebellion and sin." It was well that he did not see the face of Eliphalet Hodges then.

Dan'l Hastings nodded over the sermon. In the back part of the church, Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Smith whispered together and gaped at the two old mourners, and wondered where the boy was. They had "heerd he was in town."

Bill Tompkins brought Elizabeth to the funeral.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN another town than Dexter the events narrated in the last chapter would have proved a nine days' wonder, gained their meed of golden gossip, and then given way to some newer sensation. But not so here. This little town was not so prolific in startling episodes that she could afford to let such a one pass with anything less than the fullest comment. The sudden return of Tom Brent, his changed life, and his death were talked of for many a day. The narrative of his life was yet to be a stock camp-meeting sermon story, and the next generation of Dexterites was destined to hear of him. He became a part of the town's municipal history.

Fred's disappearance elicited no less remark. Speculations as to his whereabouts and his movements were rife. The storm of gossip which was going on around them was not lost on Eliphalet Hodges and his wife. But, save when some too adventurous inquirer called down upon himself Mrs. Hodges's crushing rebuke or the old man's mild resentment, they went their ways silent and uncommunicative.

They had heard from the young man first about two weeks after his departure. He had simply told them that he had got a place in the office of a packing establishment. Furthermore, he had begged

that they let his former fellow-townsmen know nothing of his doings or of his whereabouts, and the two old people had religiously respected his wishes. Perhaps there was some reluctance on the part of Mrs. Hodges, for after the first letter she said, "It does seem like a sin an' a shame, 'Liphalet, that we can't tell these here people how nice Fred's a-doin', so's to let 'em know that he don't need none o' their help. It jest makes my tongue fairly itch when I see Mis' Smith an' that bosom crony o' her'n, Sallie Martin, a-nosin' around tryin' to see what they kin find out."

"It is amazin' pesterin', Hester. I'm su'prised at how I feel about it myself, fur I never was no hand to want to gossip; but when I hear old Dan'l Hastings, that can't move out o' his cheer fur the rheumatiz,—when I hear him a-sayin' that he reckoned that Fred was a-goin' to the dogs, I felt jest like up an' tellin' him how things was."

"Why on airth didn't you? Ef I'd 'a' been there, I'd——"

"But you know what Freddie's letter said. I kept still on that account; but I tell you I looked at Dan'l." From his pocket the old man took the missive worn with many readings, and gazed at it fondly. "Yes," he repeated, "I looked at Dan'l hard. I felt jest like up an' tellin' him."

"Well, no wonder. I'm afeard I'd 'a' clean furgot Freddie's wishes an' told him everything. To think of old Dan'l Hastings, as old as he is, a-gossipin' about other people's business! Sakes alive! he needs every breath he's got now fur his prayers,—as all of us pore mortals do now," added Mrs. Hodges, as she let her eyes fall upon her own wrinkled hands.

"Yes, we're old, Hester, you an' I; but I'm mighty glad o' the faith I've been a-storin' up, fur it's purty considerable of a help now."

"Of course, 'Liphalet, faith is a great comfort, but it's a greater one to know that you've allus tried to do yore dooty the very best you could; not a-sayin' that you 'ain't tried."

"Most of us tries, Hester, even Dan'l."

"I ain't a-goin' to talk about Dan'l Hastings. He's jest naturally spiteful an' crabbed. I declare, I don't see how he's a-goin' to squeeze into the kingdom."

"Oh, never mind that, Hester. God ain't a-goin' to ask you to find a way."

Mrs. Hodges did not reply. She and her husband seldom disagreed now, because he seldom contradicted or found fault with her. But if this dictum of his went unchallenged, it was not so with some later conclusions at which he arrived on the basis of another of Fred's letters.

It was received several months after the settlement of the young man in Cincinnati, and succeeded a long silence. "You will think," it ran, "that I have forgotten you; but it is not so. My life has been very full here of late, it is true, but not so full as to exclude you and good Aunt Hester. I feel that I am growing. I can take good full breaths here. I couldn't in Dexter: the air was too rarefied by religion."

Mrs. Hodges gasped as her husband read this aloud, but there was the suspicion of a smile about the corners of Eliphalet's mouth.

"You ask me if I attend any church," the letter went on. "Yes, I do. When I first left, I thought that I never wanted to see the inside of a meeting-house again. But there is a young lady in our office who is very much interested in church work, and somehow she has got me interested too, and I go to her church every Sunday. It is Congregational."

"Congregational!" exclaimed Mrs. Hodges. "Congregational! an' he borned an' raised up in Cory Chapel. It's the first step."

"He wasn't borned nothin' but jest a pore little outcast sinner, an' as fur as the denomination goes, I guess that church is about as good as any other."

"Liphalet Hodges, air you a-backslidin' too?"

"No: I'm like Freddie; I'm a-growin'."

"It's a purty time of life fur you to be a-talkin' about growin'. You're jest like an old tree that has fell in a damp place an' sen's out a few shoots on the trunk. It thinks it's a-growin' too, but them shoots soon wither, an' the tree rots; that's what it does."

"But before it rotted, it grewed all that was in it to grow, didn't it? Well, that's all anybody can do, tree or human bein'." He paused for a moment. "I 'ain't got all my growth yet."

"You kin git the rest in the garden of the Lord."

"It ain't good to change soil on some plants too soon. I ain't ready to be set out." He went on reading:

"I'm not so narrow as I was at home. I don't think so many things are wrong as I used to. It is good to be like other people sometimes, and not to feel yourself apart from all the rest of humanity. I am growing to act more like the people I meet, and so I am——" the old man's hand trembled, and he moved the paper nearer to his eyes—"I——" What's this he says? 'I am learning to dance.'

"There!" his wife shot forth triumphantly. "What did I tell you? Going to a Congregational church an' learnin' to dance, an' he not a year ago a preacher of the gospel."

Eliphalet was silent for some time: his eyes looked far out into space. Then he picked up the paper that had fluttered from his hand, and a smile flitted over his face.

"Well, I don't know," he said. "Freddie's young, an' they's worse things in the world than dancin'."

"You ain't a-upholdin' him in that too, air you? Well, I never! You'd uphold that sinful boy ef he committed murder."

"I ain't a-upholdin' nothin' but what I think is right."

"Right! 'Liphalet Hodges, what air you a-sayin'?"

"Not that I mean to say that dancin' is right, but——"

"There ain't no 'buts' in the Christian religion, 'Liphalet, an' there ain't no use in yore tryin' to cover up Freddie's faults."

"I ain't a-tryin' to cover nothin' up from God. But sometimes I git to thinkin' that mebbe we put a good many more bonds on ourselves than the Lord ever meant us to carry."

"Oh, some of us don't struggle under none too heavy burdens.

Some of us have a way of jest slippin' 'em off of our shoulders like a bag o' flour."

"Meanin' me. Well, mebbe I have tried to make things jest as easy fur myself as possible, but I 'ain't never tried to make 'em no harder fur other people. I like to think of the Master as a good gentle friend, an' mebbe I 'ain't shifted so many o' the burdens He put on me that He won't let me in at last."

"'Liphalet, I didn't say what I said fur no slur ag'in' you. You're as good a Christian man as—well, as most."

"I know you didn't mean no slur, Hester. It was jest yore dooty to say it. I've come to realize how strong yore feelin' about dooty is, in the years we've been together, an' I wouldn't want you to be any different."

The calm of old age had come to these two. Life's turbulent waters toss us and threaten to rend our frail bark in pieces. But the swelling of the tempest only lifts us higher, and finally we reach and rest upon the Ararat of age, with the swirling floods below us.

Eliphalet went on with the letter. "He says some more about that little girl. 'Alice is a very nice and sensible girl. I like her very much. She helps me to get out of myself and to be happy. I have never known before what a good thing it was to be happy,—perhaps because I have tried so hard to be so. I believe that I have been selfish and egotistical.' Freddie don't forgit his words," the old man paused to say. "'I have always thought too much of myself, and not enough of others. That was the reason that I was not strong enough to live down the opposition in Dexter. It seems that, after all your kindness to me, I might have stayed and made you and Aunt Hester happy for the rest of your days.' Bless that boy! 'But the air stifled me. I could not breathe in it. Now that I am away, I can look back and see it all,—my mistakes and my shortcomings; for my horizon is broader and I can see clearer. I have learned to know what pleasure is, and it has been like a stimulant to me. I have been given a greater chance to love, and it has been like the breath of life to me. I have come face to face with Christianity without cant, and I respect it for what it is. Alice understands me and brings out the best that is in me. I have always thought that it was good for a young man to have a girl friend.'"

For an instant, Mrs. Hodges resumed her old manner. A slight wave from the old flood had reached the bark and rocked it. She pursed her lips and shook her head. "He's furgot Elizabeth in a mighty short time."

"Ef he hadn't, he'd ought to be spanked like a child. Elizabeth never was the kind of a mate fur Freddie, an' there ain't nobody that knows it better than you yourself, Hester, an' you know it."

Mrs. Hodges did not reply. The wavelet had subsided again.

"Now jest listen how he ends up. 'I want you and Aunt Hester to come down and see me when you can. I will send for you in a week or two, if you will promise to come. Write to me, both of you. Won't you? Your changed boy, Fred.' Changed, an' I'm glad of it. He's more like a natural boy of his age now than he ever was

before. He's jest like a young oak saplin'. Before, he allus put me in mind o' one o' them oleander slips that you used to cut off an' hang ag'in' the house in a bottle o' water so's they'd root. We'll go down, won't we, Hester? We'll go down an' see him."

"Not me, 'Liphalet. You kin go; but I ain't a-goin' nowhere to be run over by the cars or wrecked or somethin'. Not that I'm so powerful afeared of anything like that, fur I do hope I'm prepared to go whenever the Master calls; but it ain't fur me to begin a-runnin' around at my age, after livin' all these years at home. No, indeed. Why, I couldn't sleep in no other bed but my own now. I don't take to no sich new things."

And go Mrs. Hodges would not. So Eliphalet was forced to write and refuse the offered treat. But on a day there came another letter, and he could no longer refuse to grant the wish of his beloved boy. The missive was very brief. It said only, "Alice has promised to marry me. Won't you and Aunt Hester come and see me joined to the dearest girl in the world?" There was a postscript to it: "I did not love Elizabeth. I know it now."

"Hester, I'm a-goin'," said Eliphalet.

"Go on, 'Liphalet, go on. I want you to go, but I'm set in my ways now. I do hope that girl kin do something besides work in an office. She ought to be a good housekeeper, an' a good cook, so's not to kill that pore child with dyspepsy. I do hope she won't put saleratus in her biscuits."

"I think it's Freddie's soul that needs feedin'."

"His soul'll go where it don't need feedin', ef his stomach ain't 'tended to right. Ef I went down there, I could give the girl some points."

"I don't reckon you'd better go, Hester. As you say, you're set in yore ways, an' mebbe her ways 'ud be diff'rent; an' then—then you'd both feel it."

"Oh, I suppose she thinks she knows it all, like most young people do."

"I hope she don't; but I'm a-goin' down to see her anyhow, an' I'll carry yore blessin' along with mine."

For the next week, great were the preparations for the old man's departure, and when finally he left the old gate and turned his back on the little cottage it was as if he were going on a great journey rather than a trip of less than a hundred miles. It had been a long time since he had been on a train, and at first he felt a little dubious. But he was soon at home, for his kindly face drew his fellow-passengers to him, and he had no lack of pleasant companions on the way.

Like Fred, the noises of the great station would have bewildered him, but as he alighted and passed through the gate a strong hand was laid on his shoulder, and his palm was pressing the palm of his beloved son. The old carpet-bag fell from his hands.

"Freddie Brent, it ain't you?"

"It's I, Uncle 'Liph, and no one else. And I'm so glad to see you that I don't know what to do. Give me that bag."

They started away, the old man chattering like a happy child. He

could not keep from feasting his eyes on the young man's face and form.

"Well, Freddie, you jest don't look like yourself. You're—you're——"

"I'm a man, Uncle 'Liph."

"I allus knowed you'd be, my boy. I allus knowed you'd be. But yore aunt Hester told me to ask you ef—ef you'd dropped all yore religion. She's mighty disturbed about yore dancin'."

Brent laughed aloud in pure joy.

"I knowed you hadn't," the old man chuckled.

"Lost it all? Uncle 'Liph, why, I've just come to know what religion is. It's to get bigger and broader and kinder, and to live and to love and be happy, so that people around you will be happy."

"You're still a first-rate preacher, Freddie."

"Oh, yes, Uncle 'Liph; I've been to a better school than the Bible Seminary. I haven't got many religious rules and formulas, but I'm trying to live straight and do what is right."

The old man had paused with tears in his eyes. "I been a-prayin' fur you," he said.

"So has Alice," replied the young man, "though I don't see why she needs to pray. She's a prayer in herself. She has made me better by letting me love her. Come up, Uncle 'Liph. I want you to see her before we go on to my little place."

They stopped before a quiet cottage, and Fred knocked. In the little parlor a girl came to them. She was little, not quite up to Fred's shoulder. His eyes shone as he looked down upon her brown head. There were lines about her mouth, as if she had known sorrow that had blossomed into sweetness. The young man took her hand. "Uncle 'Liph," he said, "this is Alice."

She came forward with winning frankness, and took the old man's hand in hers. The tears stood in his eyes again.

"This is Alice," he said; "this is Alice." Then his gaze travelled to Fred's glowing face, and, with a sob in his voice that was all for joy, he added, "Alice, I'm glad you're a-livin'."

WOMAN'S WORK AND WAGES.

THE aim of this paper is to present as clearly and directly as possible some practical aspects of woman's work and wages by a woman who writes from experience, and not from theory, and who believes—

1st, That it is not to the advantage of the average woman, new or old, to become a direct wage-earner; and,

2d, That it is not to the advantage of society that she should become a direct wage-earner.

My chief reason for believing that the average woman is better off not to enter the labor market as a direct wage-earner is that, as things stand now, and have stood for thousands of years, she has an income as an indirect wage-earner assured to her by marriage: in other words, matrimony is a profession for which, by nature, tradition, and education, she is better fitted than for any other. The centuries have moulded her to that end, just as, by the cultivation of such intellectual habits as accuracy and application, they have moulded the average man to the purposes of direct wage-earning.

Matrimony is for woman a lucrative profession,—the most lucrative, in fact; for I know of no other way in which she can earn so much money. Under the present régime only exceptional women under exceptional women earn three thousand dollars a year; but I venture to say that there are in the city in which I write at least one hundred women who annually have the spending, the control, or the enjoyment of that sum,—not because they are the superiors in native ability or mental equipment or moral endowments of what are termed self-supporting women, but because they have been tolerably fortunate in following woman's natural trade of matrimony.

But money, you say, is a sordid criterion by which to rate the advantages of marriage. So it is, and I do it only to prove that my estimate of marriage as the natural and proper means of woman's support is based neither upon sentiment nor upon convention, but upon actuality, and in no way interferes with my belief that woman finds her noblest and highest development in the married state. But, aside from all the riches of affection and sentiment that are indissolubly connected with the marriage bond (over which I must pass as foreign to my subject), there is the respect attaching to the married state for woman which attaches to no other calling she can follow. So distinctly is this recognized that there never has been a civilized nation—Greece excepted—in which, theoretically, at least, a noble position has not been accorded to the married woman in the family and in society. This is the case in America to-day, in spite of what looks like a widespread disinclination on the part of both men and women to marry.

The usage of centuries has confirmed woman in the rights, duties, and prerogatives of this position; and the laws of the land maintain her in it. Indeed, in some parts of the United States she has more

than justice done her,—in New York, for instance, where the married woman's control of her own and her husband's property exceeds his control over her property or his own.

I have tried to make plain why I believe that the woman of average powers and average aspirations will, with ordinary luck, do better for herself financially, socially, and legally by remaining an indirect wage-earner through marriage than by entering the labor market as a direct wage-earner; and again I say that I see no good reason why she should give up a certainty for an uncertainty, a safe monopoly for a doubtful investment, and a line of activity in which she has attained unique skill for one in which she must long remain but an indifferent workman.

But the fact remains that, while the majority of women have always viewed matrimony with favor (or, at least, have always acted as if they did), for the last twenty-five years a steadily increasing minority have taken an opposite view of the matter. In comparing different classes of girls we find that, while the ignorant and the poor go on marrying about as they did formerly, there is a marked falling off in the middle and upper classes. In many localities there are not as many men as women. Again, there is a decided tendency in America to separate men and women socially, so that many a woman never receives an offer of marriage from a man whose education or social position makes him her equal. Still further, with the industrial independence of woman has come a social independence, which has begotten not only a repugnance for the domestic duties and relations natural to her, but also a restless desire to substitute for them new activities and powers. Marriage no longer satisfies; women are no longer content to stay at home, but clamor to go out in the world and earn money and be independent. They want to "do something," they say; but they seem to think that helping to rear a family and make home pleasant is not "doing something," while drawing a salary once a month is "doing something."

Doubtless our increasing luxury and worldliness have something of this to answer for. The family income, which was large enough to satisfy the wife in her young days, and has sufficed to bring up the family, cannot give the grown-up daughter all she wants in the way of dress and amusement, so she begins to "do something." Old-fashioned men are slow to see that women nowadays require something more for their happiness than food and clothing; that the old order by which a girl said to her father, "Father, please give me money to get myself a new pair of slippers with," or, "Father, you haven't given me my money for the contribution-box," has ceased to answer. Many a girl becomes a self-supporter as much because she finds this sort of dependence galling as from a desire for more money. Indeed, after the grades of labor are passed into which women are pressed by sheer necessity, there remains a broad belt of varied activities followed by women whose impulse in working is sentimental revolt against the old order rather than any real financial need.

When the New Woman wants to "do something," what she really means is that she wishes to exchange her old, indefinite, heterogeneous

duties for the definite duties in which she sees the majority of the men about her engaged. How this dislike for her own proper sphere came about I cannot stop to trace; but I believe that she makes a great mistake in supposing that her work will become more valuable by being shifted off the old trolley wires onto the new. Woman in the old days was not a drone in the hive, when she kept the house, bore children, read a little, did a little embroidery and painting and music, had a regard for her servants, maintained kindly relations with the poor, did her part in the church. I know that a life so spent never summed itself up in a book published, or a seat in a School Board, or an honorable mention at a foreign university. It was passed in no definite labor, but it nevertheless bore definite and very precious fruit.

The best work of the world—the researches of scholars and scientists, the labors of literary men, of physicians and lawyers—is by its nature indefinite; and it is surprising in reading the lives of the men and women who have contributed most to the great thoughts and the great pleasures of the world to see how plastic and mobile their lives were; how they shifted about from place to place, and spent years, apparently, without accomplishing anything; how prolific they were in failures and disappointments.

Married women may be considered as having settled the question of self-support. It is upon those who do not marry that the problem presses. We often hear it said that the world is hard on women, and many people talk as if some exceptions might and should be made from the laws of modern industrialism in favor of women wage-earners. The world is hard, but no harder, no more unjust, to women than to men; and no legislation was ever yet enacted to protect or favor by artificial means one class of labor against another that harm did not result. If woman enters the business field she must accept the conditions existing; and those conditions are the laws of supply and demand, and the competition resulting from their operation. No man or woman can enter the labor market and not compete, unless he or she possesses quite exceptional qualifications; and to compete is to strive with others for the same thing. Competition is a warfare, where your success is my defeat, where whoever takes up arms must fight, and where the one who exercises the greatest skill and the greatest endurance wins. Competition involves and compels the survival of the fittest, as rigorously as do the laws of life and death.

That the woman who enters the field of business competes at a great disadvantage, owing to her physical disabilities, her lack of business habits and technical training, is true; but if women are to work on the same terms with men (and ask yourself what other terms are possible), they must accept the same conditions that men accept.

If a one-legged man should insist on being a letter-carrier, we might admire his courage and perseverance, but we should urge him to choose an occupation for which he was better suited. He might say with truth that the world is hard on one-legged men: doubtless it is. But what is hardness to the one-legged man is simply justice to the two-legged man. To make special regulations in behalf of cripples would be to create false conditions that could in the end result only in

harm. To make special regulations in behalf of women could only have the same result.

The manner in which the laws of supply and demand operate over the destinies of women is very well illustrated by the controversy with regard to the salaries paid to women school-teachers. Women teachers in the public schools receive much smaller compensation than men teachers,—a seeming injustice which the champions of woman are eager to repair. They say—and with apparent truth—that the lower-grade teachers' wages average less, considering their necessary expenses, than the wages of the cooks of the city. They forget, however, to take into account the two factors that cause this disparity.

What determines the rate of any kind of wages? The proportion of the supply of labor to the demand for it. How does the supply of lower-grade female teachers compare with the supply of cooks? The teacher market has for years been overstocked, and every June sees the congestion increase. If a vacancy occurs in a primary or grammar school it can be filled immediately from a long waiting list of well qualified candidates. It is no such easy matter to replace a good cook: it may be only after months of family discomfiture that her equal is found. A good cook is worth more money than a good primary school teacher because she is harder to obtain, and, owing to the premium set upon her services in consequence of this scarcity, harder to retain.

The inevitable result of a congestion of the labor market is to lower wages. Each candidate practically underbids the other, and the wage that will satisfy the lowest bidder is the wage that all must accept. You will teach for eight dollars a week, Miss S. will do it for seven dollars and fifty cents, Miss T. for seven dollars. I need money so much that I would rather do it for six dollars and seventy-five cents than not do it at all. I practically determine the wages for all the others, who must abide by it or exclude themselves from the chance of engagement. The school board set the price of this kind of teaching at six dollars and seventy-five cents, and then proceed to pick out the best workers they can get for the money. So long as they can engage satisfactory help at that price—and they always can, because the number of girls who must and will teach is constantly increasing and never decreasing—they will never raise it. Why should they? They are in the position of a city contractor, one of whose duties it is to buy female labor to fill the public schools, and another to make the city's appropriations go as far as possible. There is no more reason why a school-teacher should expect more than the market price than why a mason should.

As to the assertion—also apparently true—that women teachers are paid less for doing a given kind and amount of work than men teachers who perform the same work, the champions of our sex choose to ignore the prejudice which exists in the public mind in favor of intrusting the highest school positions to men,—a prejudice which is strengthened by the fact that the supply of men fitted to fill them is much smaller than the supply of women fitted to fill the positions which the public likes to see filled by women. Now, a popular preju-

dice has its market value, like everything else; and you cannot annihilate it by ignoring it. A popular prejudice which can year after year reserve the most important and the most lucrative positions for men, and which is strong enough to set a premium of hundreds of dollars upon their services, acts just as practically to exclude women and to keep them poor as does some real mental or physical disability. But we have Abraham Lincoln's word for it that you cannot deceive all the people all the time, so that if men continue to be better paid and better treated by school boards all over the country, it can be only because they deserve it.

I grant, of course, that all this is hard for the woman wage-earner; but I believe that it is strict justice, and I do not see, if the conditions were yet more bitter, how she would have a right to complain, as she often does, that she is not receiving her due. For at present the woman is not the equal of the man in the labor market. An average woman cannot do as much work, or as good work, or as varied work, as an average man could in her position; she is not his equal as a producer. For one thing, her labor is apt not to be continuous; she is far more likely than a man to be kept away by the weather, by sickness, by some special exigency in her family, etc. Again, her labor is apt not to be permanent; that is, it may cease at any moment. In 1895 the average age of women wage-earners was found to be twenty-two years. It is not stating it too broadly to say that any woman, at any time, may get married. Her employer knows in engaging her that when this opportunity occurs she will leave him; and the fact that she grows more valuable to him the longer she stays will not prevent her from leaving. However capable, however loyal, however ambitious she may be, she will throw up her employer's advantage, she will fling to the winds all her past acquirements, all her future prospects, for the sake of getting married.

Marriage, actual or potential, vitiates woman's worth as a wage-earner, because it weakens her hold on her work, and (in the former case) eventually withdraws her from it altogether. On the other hand, marriage adds to the permanency and continuity of man's labor. For love of wife and child he will work harder and better and longer; society recognizes him as a more valuable factor; he is more complete married than single. A woman becomes more complete by marriage also, but her completeness not only fails to confirm her in her trade relations, but tends always to withdraw her from them into domestic relations.

The woman wage-earner has also to acknowledge that there are some things that she can seldom do as well, and other things that she can never by any possibility do as well, as man. Where positions call for large physical endowments, she is defeated by the natural gifts of men. She cannot with the greatest determination or talent in the world make herself large like a man; she cannot manufacture a big, resonant voice like a man; she cannot exercise the unconscious policeman'ship of a man.

I cannot illustrate this point of woman's trade inferiority to man better than by telling how these facts operate against a woman in the

business I know most about,—the newspaper business. A good man reporter is expected to know enough to write intelligently about anything, from a godet skirt to the single tax. He must work as long as there is anything to do, he must do whatever he is told to do, he must go wherever he is sent. If a fire breaks out or a murder is committed, he must follow it up at any sacrifice of personal safety or comfort. Now, what woman reporter could equal such a competitor? What woman would consent to place herself in a position to be called upon to compete with him? She could not report a race or a political debate so intelligently, because she has not the prerequisite sporting and political knowledge; she could not manage a sparring match or the sessions of the police courts, because she would find the work too distasteful; she could not respond to the sudden call of her chief to investigate a freshet or to walk a long distance to the scene of some important occurrence at half-past two o'clock in the morning, because it would not be proper for her to go. These are all things that by no possibility can she ever do as easily or as well as the men reporters. And in yet another respect her work is inferior to theirs, because the things that she is strongest in are precisely those which are of the least news value. An afternoon tea is not equal as a piece of news to a runaway; the most eloquent article on the care of the complexion or the care of infants will not sell a paper like a second-class murder or railroad accident. She is the inferior of the men, you see, not only in kind, but in degree. A stupid man may be—often is—the trade superior of a very bright woman.

What then? Is the world unjust? Is her employer hard to the woman reporter? Not at all. The man reporter long ago set the pace; if the woman wants to run the race at all, she must either adapt her step to his or devise a new one of her own. If she succeeds, it will not be by luck or partiality; if she fails, it will not be through any injustice.

But competition is not confined to men and women: it exists between woman and woman, and the conflict between skilled labor and crude labor among women is as cruel as between the man and the woman. Much of the suffering of working women arises from competition with their own sex; for it is evident that, when women of exceptional abilities and advantages enter into competition with those who are inferior in either, the same hardship must result to the latter as if they were the rivals of men.

When women from well-to-do families force themselves into the labor market, they buy their "individuality" and "independence" at the cost of untold misery to their poorer sisters. Jacob Riis says that the wage of needlewomen in New York City has been brought almost to starvation point by the product of girls in the rural parts of Maine, who, residing in their fathers' homes, in localities where living is cheap, earn several dollars a week each by the fine underwear they make and send to New York for sale. They are not supporting themselves: they are simply earning pin-money.

A forceful illustration of this kind came to my notice the other day, when a friend to whom I had shown a bit of embroidery told me

enthusiastically about the work of a friend of hers in Tampa, Florida. She concluded by saying, "She sends a great deal of it to New York, and last year she made four hundred dollars. Pretty good for pin-money, wasn't it?" Now I hold it open to question how much moral right there is to work in this way. If her work had been of a kind that no one else could do, or if it had been in the nature of some invention or creation that was likely to increase the artistic or financial value of that particular kind of needlework, the case would have been different; but I do not understand such to have been the case.

It is just such competition, not the hardness of the business world, or the injustice of men, that grinds women down; and I never hear of girls with all the means of comfortable and even elegant living at their command becoming kindergartners, stenographers, nurses, and clerks without a feeling of indignation at their inhumanity. If they work for pay, they are often taking what morally belongs to another; if they work for nothing, they are directly depreciating the value of the services of those women who must sell theirs. It is customary to ask women of means to give some of their money for humanity's sake to the poor: is it too much to ask them to abstain, for humanity's sake, from taking money from the poor?

I said at the beginning of this paper that I thought women bettered themselves financially, legally, and socially by becoming indirect wage-earners through marriage rather than direct wage-earners in the world of business. I should like to add—and, if you have followed me with anything like sympathy, you will agree with me—that a woman also betters herself in point of happiness. Each career has its trials, its pains; but I believe that the conditions of most married women's lives bring to them more of the things that satisfy a woman's deepest, truest nature than a business life brings to a self-supporting woman.

The displacement of labor caused by the overstocking of the labor market with women help, while it has not resulted in the financial prosperity of the female wage-earner, has acted unfavorably upon the earning capacity of men. Sometimes their wages are cut because of the competition of women; sometimes they are displaced altogether by women. The young man who should marry and become the head of a family finds himself displaced at the counter or in the office by a young woman who may be obliged to struggle single-handed with poverty for years because the man who is her social mate cannot afford to marry her. You can see what a loss this arrangement is to the life of the nation, the core of which is the family. You can also see, when large numbers of women succeed in ousting men from a line of occupation, how much suffering might be entailed on the displaced men and their families. If the time should ever come when woman would compete on terms of perfect equality with man, so that wages were equally divided, the labor troubles that must result would assume the proportions of a public calamity. A man would not then continue to earn say fifteen dollars a week, while his wife earned a like amount; he would earn seven dollars and fifty cents, and she seven dollars and fifty cents. Not only would the family be no richer in consequence of the successful competition of the wife with the husband, but it would be

unspeakably poorer, because that competition would withdraw from the home its greatest source of well-being,—I mean the mother. How detrimentally would such an arrangement react upon the character and development of the children! How it would sap the ideality of life, not only within the four walls of each home, but throughout the community and the nation!

I hold the smallness of wages and the hardships of competition that women are forced to endure a blessed safeguard to civilization, and to woman herself. The world could spare its money more easily than it could spare its love and romance, its tender relations, its beauty, and the grace and loveliness brought to it by the spiritual influence of good women.

Eleanor Whiting.

THE FACULTY OF COMPUTING IN ANIMALS.

THAT some animals can count is, in my opinion, an established fact: that they likewise possess the faculty of close observation and personal discrimination is also a truth which cannot be contravened.

The mason wasps, or mud-daubers, build their compartment houses generally in places easily accessible to the investigator; therefore the experiments and observations which I am about to detail can be duplicated and verified without difficulty.

These interesting members of the Hymenoptera, the *avant-courriers* of the social insects, can be seen any bright day in August or September busily engaged on the margins of ponds, ditches, and puddles in the procurement of building materials. They will alight close to the water's edge, and, vibrating their wings rapidly, will run hither and thither over the moist clay until they arrive at a spot which, in their opinion, will furnish suitable mortar. Quickly biting up a pellet of mud, they moisten it with saliva, all the while kneading it and rolling it between maxillæ and palpi. When it has reached the proper consistency, they bear it away to some dry, warm place, such as the rafters of an outhouse or a garret, and there use it in the construction of their adobe or mud nests.

There may be dozens of these nests in the process of construction, and arranged on the rafters side by side, yet these busy little masons never make the mistake of confounding the houses: after securing mortar they invariably return, each to her own structure. This statement can be easily verified. While the insect is engaged in applying the mortar, take a camel's-hair brush and quickly paint a small spot on her shoulders with a mixture of zinc oxide and gum arabic; then mark the nest. The marked wasp will always return to the marked nest.

As soon as the cells are completed, the wasp deposits an egg in each and immediately begins to busy herself about the future welfare of the coming baby wasps. Just here these remarkable creatures show

that they possess a mental faculty which far transcends any like act of human ideation; they are able to tell which of the eggs will produce males and which females. Not only are they able to do this, but, seemingly fully aware of the fact that it takes a longer time for the female larvæ to pupate than it does the male larvæ, they provide for this emergency by depositing in the cells containing female eggs a larger amount of food. It is in the procurement and storage of this food-supply that these insects give unmistakable evidence of the possession by them of the faculty of computing.

The knowing little mother is well aware of the fact that as soon as the egg hatches the young grub will need food, and an abundance of food at that: so, before closing the orifice of the cell, she packs away in it the favorite food of her offspring, which is spiders. She knows that in the close, hot cell the spiders, if dead, would soon become putrid and unfit for food; therefore she does not kill them outright, but simply anæsthetizes them by instilling a small amount of poison through that sharp and efficacious hypodermic needle, her sting.

Each variety of masons uses a different spider; the common blue mason is partial to the beautiful *Argiope*, which, banded as it is with gray and yellow, is a very conspicuous object when seen on its glistening, upright wheel web. The wasp larva, as soon as it emerges from the egg-membrane, finds fresh and palatable food before its very nose, and at once begins to eat.

In the case of the males, five spiders are deposited in each cell, while eight are always placed in the female compartments. If one or more spiders are removed from the cell, the mother wasp does not appear to notice that her food-supply has been tampered with; she completes her quota, five for the males and eight for the females, and then closes the cell, no matter if there remain in the compartment only two or three spiders. Her count calls for five or eight, as the case may be, and, when she has put on top of the egg the requisite number according to her count, her responsibility ceases.

I have never known a mud-dauber to make a mistake in her computation, although I have endeavored to puzzle this little arithmetician time and again. If a wad of paper be placed in a cell after two or three spiders have been deposited, thus partially filling it, the insect knows at once that something is wrong, and will proceed to investigate. She will remove the spiders on top of the paper, will extract the wad, and will then proceed with her count. On the other hand, if several spiders be taken out when the count calls for only one or two more, the wasp does not appear to notice that the cell is almost empty; she finishes her count as if everything were correct, and then seals up the opening with mud.

The eggs all look alike, even under the microscope: how then is it possible for this little creature to discriminate between them? The queen bee has a peculiar organ called the *spermatheca*, through which or by which she can fertilize her eggs at will, thus producing drones or male bees whenever she so desires. Connected with the oviducts of wasps are organs analogous to the *spermathecae* of bees: hence the ability to lay fertilized eggs rests with the ovipositing female.

The quail lays some twelve or fifteen eggs, and seems to be aware of the fact that some of her eggs are missing when several have been removed from the nest. When one of these birds has laid six or eight eggs, if two or three be removed she will abandon the nest and deposit the remainder of her eggs elsewhere. This behavior on the part of the bird has been attributed to her sense of smell; she, detecting the presence of an enemy by the scent of his hand left behind in the nest, recognizes the danger, and therefore abandons the nest. But numerous experiments along this line teach me that smell has nothing to do with it whatever. I have removed eggs with a long iron ladle, the bowl of which I had carefully refrained from touching, and also with sticks freshly cut in the wood, and yet the birds would invariably abandon their nests. On the contrary, when all, or nearly all, the eggs have been laid, several may be removed either with the ladle or with the naked hand, and yet the bird will not abandon her nest. She seems to be able to count up to six or eight; beyond this latter number her faculty of computing does not extend. After the full laying has been deposited in the nest and the process of incubation has become established, a large number of the eggs may be removed, and yet the bird will continue to set until the remaining eggs have been hatched out. This faculty of computing seems to be present in other birds to some extent; the domesticated guinea-fowl and the turkey sometimes possess it in a marked degree, though in most of these fowls domestication has almost entirely eradicated it. The domestic barnyard hen has had her nest robbed for such a long period of time that she has lost the faculty of counting. But even this meek provider of food for mankind is able, in some instances, to count one: she will not lay in her nest unless a nest-egg be left to delude her. The nest-egg may be wholly factitious and made of china, marble, chalk, stone, or iron painted white; the hen does not seem to care, so long as it bears some resemblance to an egg.

That the turkey-hen can count, the following instance occurring under my own observation would seem to indicate. The bird had a nest in my garden in which she had deposited three eggs. One day another turkey, seized with the desire of ovipositing, spied this nest and laid an egg therein. The original owner of the nest came along soon after the interloper had left her egg; she examined the nest carefully, and turned the eggs with her beak. Finally, she thrust her beak through the shell of an egg and bore it far from the nest before dropping it on the ground. Now, as far as I could tell, the eggs were alike, but the sharper and more discriminating eyes of the turkey undoubtedly saw, on close examination, some peculiarity in color or shape in the stranger's egg, and therefore bore it away and destroyed it. I believe, however, that her attention was arrested at first by the unexpected number of eggs in the nest, and that she was enabled to detect the stranger's egg only after much inspection and comparison.

Many animals have been taught to count, but none of them show that they fully appreciate the value of numerical rotation. Of course, in the vast majority of trained animals, the seeming appreciation is only a trick founded upon the sense of smell, sight, touch, or taste.

Romanes taught a dog to present certain numbers when it desired certain articles of food; these numbers were painted on pieces of card-board, and the animal rarely made a mistake. The same author mentions another dog which had been taught to speak, it having a hundred or more words in its vocabulary. If my memory serves me correctly, this animal could count up to ten, thus exceeding many races of savages that cannot count above five. In neither of these instances, however, do I think that the dogs evinced any abstract idea of numerical values. In the first instance, the number was associated with and stood for food; in the second, the dog simply imitated sounds after the manner of the parrot or raven or any other "talking" animal. But in the instance about to be given I think that the dog evinced an abstract idea of numbers, or else showed phenomenal powers of observation and discrimination. The animal in question, a high-bred collie, received an injury a year or so ago through which she became permanently and totally blind. Recently she gave birth to a litter of six puppies, all of which were uniform in size and in markings. Immediately after the birth of the puppies, the dog's owner had mother and young removed from the dark cellar in which they then were, and carried to a warm and well-ventilated room in his stables. In the darkness of the cellar one of the puppies was overlooked and left behind. As soon as the mother entered the box in which her young had been placed, she proceeded to examine them, nosing them about and licking them. Suddenly she appeared to become very much disturbed about something; she jumped out of the box and then jumped back again, nosing the puppies as before. Again she jumped from the box and then made her way toward the cellar, followed by her astonished owner, who had begun to have an inkling as to what disturbed her. She had counted her young ones, and had discovered that one had been left behind. Sure enough, the abandoned puppy was soon found and carried in triumph to the new home.

So astonished was the gentleman at this blind creature's intelligence that he resolved to experiment further. He removed another puppy and held it in his arms. It was not long before the blind mother showed her distress so plainly that her lost young one was restored to her, whereupon she lay down in the box and gave herself up to the chief function of maternity, suckling her young.

It is beyond reason to suppose that this dog discovered the absence of her young one through her sense of smell. Granted that to the maternal nose each puppy had an individual and particular odor (which I do not believe), it is hardly possible, nay, it is impossible, that the dog's sensorium had recognized and retained these different scents in the short time which had elapsed since their birth. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the dog knew that she had given birth to six young ones and that she counted them when they were removed to their new home. Again, it is a well-known fact that a dog can retain only one scent at a time; hence this fact alone would militate somewhat against the idea that the sense of smell was the detecting agent in this case. Nor could it have been the sense of touch; the mother could not have possibly familiarized herself with the individual form

of each puppy in such a short space of time. It is folly to suppose that each young one had a distinctive taste or flavor; hence the sense of taste must also be eliminated. Thus, by exclusion, there remains but one faculty, the faculty of computing, to account for the dog's actions.

Several years ago there lived in Cincinnati a mule which was employed by a street railway company in hauling cars up a steep incline. This animal was hitched in front of the regular team, and unhitched as soon as the car arrived at the top of the hill. It made a certain number of trips in the forenoon (I have forgotten the number, but will say fifty for the sake of convenience), and a like number in the afternoon, resting for an hour at noon. As soon as the mule completed its fiftieth trip it marched away to its stable without orders from its driver. To show that it was not influenced by the sound of the factory whistles and bells, the following remarkable action on the part of this animal is vouched for by the superintendent of the line, who gave me these data. On a certain occasion, during a musical festival, this mule was transferred to the night shift, and the very instant it completed its fiftieth trip it started for the stables. It took the combined efforts of several men to make it return to its duty. At night there were no bells or whistles to inform the creature that "quitting-time" had come; it had counted the trips, and, having finished its full quota of fifty, it thought that the time for rest and food had arrived.

My meals are always served at regularly appointed hours, which never vary throughout the year; and, since my cook "prides herself" on her punctuality, they are always served on the stroke of the clock. The moment the bell rings, my cat, a large and very intelligent male, takes up a position at the door, and is generally the first to enter the dining-room. A few moments before meal-time, Melchisedek (for he is of royal blood and bears a royal name) becomes uneasy, jumping from chair to floor or from floor to chair, and sometimes mewing gently. The moment the bell rings, he is all animation, and shows by his actions that he fully understands its meaning. He never mistakes the sound of the dressing-bell for that of the tea-bell, though the same bell is used. This cat may not be able to count, but that he notes the passage of time I do not for an instant doubt.

Some monkeys give unmistakable evidences of the possession by them of the computing faculty. In 1889 I made the acquaintance of a very intelligent chimpanzee which could count as high as three. That this was not a trick suggested by sensual impulses I had ample opportunity of satisfying myself. The owner of the animal would leave the room, no one being present but myself, and when I would call for two marbles, or one marble, or three marbles, as the case might be, the monkey would gravely hand over the required number. Romanes mentions an ape which could count three, the material used in his experiment being straws from the animal's cage. Wolff, Darwin, Forbes, and Hartman also give instances of the computing faculty in apes and monkeys.

James Weir, Jr.

NO. 87,617 COLT.

THE great whistle in the erecting-shop of the bridge-works boomed out twelve o'clock, and almost simultaneously the long line of sweating, dust-grimed men began pouring out of the gaping doors, glad of any respite from the 102° Fahrenheit registered inside. It was terribly hot; and in the trifle of shade afforded by the single tree growing within the limits of the yard, I could scarcely bear the weight of even a light cotton duck shirt and trousers. Every one knows what a cinder-yard is on a hot day, when one sinks ankle-deep in the dry dust that spurts up in hot jets about the feet, settling down afterward in the shoes, making one miserable till the end of the day. I was one of the assistant engineers in the designing department then, and had gone into the yard, with an exceedingly erratic transit, to lay out a new line of track; and to lay out even a simple curve with the office transits was more a question of luck than of calculation. The instrument was badly "out of adjustment," and I was setting it up in the shade to rectify its peculiarities when the dinner-hour came. As it was no use keeping on then, I knocked off work, and, sending a man for my dinner-basket, sat down to await his arrival.

"Pretty durned hot, Mr. Holden," said Pearson, one of the yard foremen, stopping to wipe his face as he spoke.

"Oh, it's not so bad," said I, laughing. "Those fellows yonder don't seem to mind it." A gang of Italian laborers farther up the yard were pushing a car loaded with scrap-iron off the main onto the siding, and before the words were out of my mouth the car banged across the switch, and, gathering way every minute, clanked and rattled down the siding, running off at the end on a pile of loose limestone ballast. Of course it was upset and the contents thrown out. The worst of it was that my transit was thrown out of level, which made me swear. But my efforts were mild as new milk compared with the flow of classical bad language in which Pearson addressed the "dagoes" responsible for the accident.

I sauntered up to the capsized car to inspect it, and found, to my great surprise, that the scrap-iron was largely made up of old bent and rusty gun-barrels, old-fashioned revolvers, and several pecks of old iron spurs, the rest being ordinary "scrap."

"Where in the world did all that stuff come from, Baker?" I asked of the scales-tender, who came up behind me.

"Oh, all that old rubbish came up from Cuba, sir," said he. "A railroad company down there sent it up to swap off for new stuff. It's what's left over from their Ten Years' War, I guess."

I stooped and picked up one of the old revolvers, a little better preserved than the others, to keep it as a trophy. The wooden grip was, of course, gone, the barrel bent at a right angle to its normal position, the hammer bent and twisted, and the trigger and guard missing. But it was good enough for a paper-weight: so I put it in my coat-pocket.

When the half-past five whistle blew, I waited outside the gate for Pearson, for I boarded at his house and we generally walked up together in the evening.

The pleasantest hour of the evening for me was the hour after supper, when I could sit outside the house, on the little porch, my feet on the railing, enjoying my evening smoke. Occasionally, not often, I could draw Pearson into conversation, which made it pleasanter, for he was a wonderfully well-informed old fellow and had seen a deal of the world. He had been a civil engineer in Central America when the Panama Canal scheme was young, and had seen the Indians die like sheep along the ill-fated railroad he had helped to build.

It was not often, however, that he could be got to talk about the past; so I was somewhat surprised when he drew a chair up alongside of mine, cocked up his feet on the railing, and got out his pipe, spitting complacently on a chicken that was scratching under a currant-bush in the little hot front yard. The hen, with an angry "cluck-cluck," fled to safer quarters, and Pearson chuckled softly as I passed him my tobacco-pouch, from which he filled his "cutty." I dropped the bag into my coat-pocket, and my hand struck something hard. "Hullo," said I; "look here, will you? Here's a relic of the Cuban War of Independence." And I handed him the old iron I had picked up in the yard. He took it and examined it curiously in the twilight.

"A Colt, isn't it?" I asked.

"Dunno," he rejoined. "Soon see, though." And, pulling out his knife, he began vigorously scraping away the rust beneath the cylinder-block, where the mark is always stamped on a Colt revolver.

"Here's a vernier glass," said I, handing him my transit glass used to read the angles.

"Bring that lamp here," said he, a moment later, scraping away harder than ever.

It was intensely hot, and I could see the great sweat-drops running down his face as he worked. Presently he scanned the iron eagerly with the glass, then——

"Good God!" said he, quickly, starting up.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Just read that number," said he, handing me the pistol and the glass. "What is it, sir? What do you make it?"

"Why, that's plain enough," said I. "It's 87,617."

"That's what I made it," said he; "but it can't be. It's simply impossible."

"What's the matter with it?" I asked.

"Just you sit there, sir, an' I'll show ye." And in a moment he was up the stairs and down again with a belt and holster of old cracked leather in his hands. Laying them on the table, he drew from the holster an old-fashioned Colt muzzle-loading revolver. "87,616," said he, solemnly.

"Well?" said I.

"I had a pair of 'em in Cuba in '69, sir," said he; "616 and 617. That there's my old gun, an', Holy Mother, if it could talk it could tell you a story that, if I told, you'd call me a liar."

"Go ahead and tell it," said I; "and I'll call you a liar afterward. Aren't you sleepy, though?"

"Sleepy!" said he, scornfully. "Wait till I'm through, an' then ask me if I'm sleepy."

"Go ahead," said I, judicially.

"Give me your tobacco again. So," handing it back to me, "you may or may not know that I come back to this country from Panama in '65. I was all broke up with Chagres fever, for of all countries ever I seen, an' I've seen a good few, that's the durndest, an' I made up my mind to settle down an' live like a white man. How long have you been engineerin', sir?" he asked,—irrelevantly, I thought.

"Nearly eight years," said I.

"That's enough to make you know the truth of what I'm goin' to say,—that when a man engineers for five years, as a rule he's fit for nothin' else. That's the way it was with me. I tried two years of it here, one with the Pennsylvania road an' a year out West. Then when I was up in the mountains, freezin' the marrow in my bones, I begun to want to go back to warm weather. There's a kind o' fascination about the tropics that I can't explain. So when I got a letter from Brown and McGish offerin' me a place as transit man for two hundred dollars a month on a corps goin' to Cuba, I jumped at it. They were goin' to build a little narrow-gauge road from some copper-mines in the Telas range in Matanzas to a little place called Esperanza, on the north coast. The mines had been opened up about two years before, but had suspended operations.

"It was the devil's own hole, sir; only three white men in the place, Mr. Mervin,—Dick Mervin; he was the chief,—Tom Walker, his assistant, an' Jerry Black, who run the level for me. Mr. Mervin an' his sister, Miss May, kept house about a half a mile from the diggin's, an' the rest of us bunked together in a frame shack that we put up, frame bein' better 'n them cussed adobe huts, that get full of lice an' fleas after every rain, in the wet season."

Here I stopped Pearson to ask something regarding the appearance of the girl. One is unconsciously prejudiced by the description of a heroine.

"Well," said he, "she was about up to your eyes, Mr. Holden." (That is five feet seven, nearly.) "Eyes the color of Cardenas Bay when the sun shines on it,—ye don't get that color nowhere out of the tropics, sir: it's God's own blue,—an' hair like red gold. Mighty little head, an' carried it like a thoroughbred. She wasn't a bit stand-offish in her ways, neither; every time either of us went to the house she'd sit an' talk to us just like we had special bids, an' God knows Jerry an' me was rough enough. Walker he was always keepin' company with her, so Jerry an' me got to callin' her 'Miss Tommy' between ourselves. We all thought when she first come there that a woman had no business in such a God-forsaken hole, but after seein' her round the place for a few months we'd 'a' been lost without her.

"Everything 'd 'a' gone right, I reckon, if it hadn't been for one of them cussed yellow-bellies that think themselves the salt of God Almighty's earth. His name was Martinez,—José Martinez. He

was good-lookin' enough in a black sort of way, showin', as Jerry says, his kin to the poor down-trodden nigger. I believe myself he was a half-breed, because he was bad clear through; an' you know a half-breed gets the dirty tricks from both sides of the house. They say he'd been learnin' medicine up here in the States. I know I wish they'd hung him here, all six feet of him, though that would have spoiled my story, but it'd have saved——" And Pearson shook his head solemnly.

"Go on," said I, impatiently.

"Well, he was always hangin' round the house, pretendin' he come to see the sick hands at the mine, but really hangin' round Miss May. After me and Jerry had joked about it for a couple of weeks, Walker got onto it. He hated the dago anyway worse 'n a partridge hates a red dog, consequently he was always polite to him.

"Well, one night the foreman of the mine come to me an' says in his pigeon-English that the timberin' in one of the leads was givin' way an' the men wouldn't go in the shaft to work: so I started up to tell Mr. Mervin, an' just as I got to the edge of the clearin' near the house I seen him walkin' up an' down with the dago. Presently they got right close to me, an', before I could say anything to tell 'em I was there, Martinez says, in English, 'So, Mr. Mervin, after tellin' you this, I come to you to ask the hand of your sister in marriage.'

"Mervin stopped short in his walk like a horse goes back on his haunches when you bring him up standin' with a Mexican bit. 'Are you a citizen of the United States?' says he.

"'No,' says Martinez; 'but I lived there six years. Why?'

"'Because,' says Mervin, 'then you ought to know that in America what the girl says goes. But I think,' says he, quite low, 'that I wouldn't ask her, if I was you.'

"'Is there any one else?' says Martinez. 'Oh, it's Señor Walker, is it? I think you'd do a good thing to run him off the work.'

"'What do you mean?' says Mervin, with the kind of ring in his voice a pick makes when it strikes solid ore.

"'Only that you'd likely have some trouble if the government knew that Gomez got some three hundred pounds of dynamite from you last month.'

"I begun to listen hard then, for I wondered where the devil that dynamite had got to. 'An' you know,' says Martinez, 'that if Walker don't leave they may find out.' An' he looked at Mervin in a queer way.

"Mervin pushes his hat on the back of his head an' jams his hands in his pockets. 'Now then, Señor Martinez,' says he, 'of course I understand your threat. In the first place, I know nothing about the dynamite, an' the man that says Gomez got it from me is a damned liar. Is that quite plain to you?' says he, just as soft as he used to talk to Miss May. 'An', lastly, I don't think you need trouble us again, for if you do'—his old man begun to rise then, for he breaks out with—'for if I catch you hangin' round here again I'll break every bone in your miserable body.' An' he could have done it, too. Then he told him something quite personal that Martinez will never

have carved on his tombstone for his friends to read. After he got done with his valedictory, as I seen it called in the papers, he turned an' went up to the house. I cut round to the back, for I didn't want him to see me.

"The moon was shinin' bright as day, an' the great palm-trees in front of the house was waverin' an' flickerin' like big ferns in the night wind that come right in off the bay. Presently, when I got near the house, I seen two people on the veranda, an' I stops short, for I knowed who they was. Walker he was standin' near the railin', sayin' something quite low to Miss May. Her hands was clasped in front like this, an' she was kind of hangin' her head. Then all of a sudden he stops talkin' an' holds out both hands an' gets hold of hers, an' he draws her to him an' holds her to him for a bit, kissin' her all the time. I must have stood there for five minutes, feelin' like a thief, when there was a rustlin' in the chaparral an' Mr. Mervin comes into the clearin', singin' in a laughin' voice. Quite likely you know that old song, sir." And Pearson began to hum,—

"'Who would perish in the desert with a forest's shade near by?
Who would die of thirst tormented while a fountain ripples high?
Oh, I tell you there's a pleasure, an' you may not, cannot break it;
You will find 'twill fill the measure, if you want a kiss, to take it.'

"'Hold hard, old boy,' says Mervin, laughin', as he comes out of the bushes toward the house. Miss May she looks at him just once, an' then runs into the house, an' Walker comes up holdin' out his hand with, 'Wish us joy, old man.'

"'So I do,' says Mervin, grippin' his hand. 'Both of you, God bless you.' Then I come up an' told him what I had to say about the timber, an' Walker an' me started off down the horse-track to our shanty.

"The next mornin' early Mr. Mervin sent for me an' says, 'Pearson, I'm goin' off on a little picnic with my sister an' Mr. Walker, an' I want you to keep an eye on things. You an' Black get your dinner at my house,' says he; 'there's some good whiskey there, too, an' while you're about it just drink a health to Miss May and Walker. It's all made up between 'em.'

"'We will so,' says I: 'if drinkin' 'll give 'em health an' happiness, we'll fix 'em for life.'

"That was an unlucky day for us. Everything went wrong at the drift. Two cars smashed through the thirty-foot trestle an' near killed a man, an' Jerry near licked the life outen another for hittin' him on the head with a pick. Of course it was accidental, but Jerry says 'ignorance of the law excuses no one,' and pretty near tore him into crab-meat. But the worst of it all was at dinner-time. Jerry an' me had just done grub, an' was sittin' at the table, smokin', with the drinks in front of us, when in comes Josefa, the cook.

"'Los soldados! Los soldados!' says she, cryin' an' wringin' her hands.

"'Well,' says Jerry, pourin' some more whiskey into his glass, 'let 'em come. Ask 'em in, Josefa.'

"I jumped to the window, an' seen 'em comin' into the clearin'. There was about twenty of 'em, but Martinez wasn't with 'em. It took me just about two minutes to make Jerry understand how things was, an' he says, 'Say, Jake, let's let 'em take us. You're about Mervin's size, an' I'll do for Walker.'

"'You're a plucky little devil,' says I; 'but I doubt if I've the nerve. Maybe they'll kill us.'

"'Might as well kill us as scare us to death,' says he. 'Anyway, it'll help Miss May. God help the woman that they capture!'

"Their captain halted his men in the open an' come in by himself. 'Señor Mervin,' says he to me, 'I am ordered to arrest you for aiding the rebel cause, as also your friend Señor Walker.'

"'Sir,' says I, quite dignified, 'I protest against this action. I claim the protection due an American citizen.'

"'God help us, then,' says Jerry, 'if that's all the protection we'll get.'

"From the Telas range into Cardenas is about eight miles of the worst road ever I tramped over, an' at the end of the road, as well as I could tell, there was every chance of our facin' a wall with a firin'-squad at our backs. I was scared near sick, but Jerry he kep' on a-whistlin' like he didn't care a damn if school kep' or not.

"Night come on just as we reached Cardenas, an' a devil of a big crowd gathered to see *los perros Americanos*—that's American dogs, sir—who had aided the rebels. They hadn't tied us in no way, but just shoved us along with gun-buttoes to quicken us, but you can guess we wasn't in no hurry. They put us in one of their cursed adobe huts, with a guard at the door, an' then left us for a bit, an' presently in comes a corporal with four men bringin' irons that they put on our feet. 'Twas a bar about two foot long, with a cuff for the ankle in each end fastened to it with a couple of links.

"'All this comes of your tryin' to play the hero,' says I to Jerry. 'Likely they'll shoot us.'

"'Very likely,' says he, pullin' out his pipe an' lightin' it. 'Wait till dark, though.'

"'What for?' says I.

"'Why, to get away, you fool,' says he. 'D'ye think I'm a-goin' to stay here to be shot?'

"Then he begun raisin' such a fuss that the sentry come in. 'I want to see the captain,' says Jerry. So, after a deal of palaver, that officer comes in, an' we asks him what are we arrested for.

"'For supplyin' dynamite to the rebels,' says he.

"'Who says so?' I asked; 'Martinez?'

"'Yes,' says he, unthinkin'. 'You'll go by ship to-morrow to Havana, so you'd best get some sleep, an' a few masses wouldn't hurt you,' says he, grinnin'. 'Do you want to see a priest?'

"'No, you grinnin' ape,' says I, 'we don't want to see a priest; but I'd like to look at you across the sights of a Sharp's.'

"He cursed us an' went out, an' Jerry says, 'Jake, when it gets dark I'll yell for water. You stand in the dark, an' when the guard comes in, knock him down, an' don't hit him like you're spankin' a baby. The harder you hit the better, an' if you kill him no matter.'

"All right," says I; for that guard had hit me in the back with his gunstock on the way from Telas, an' I wanted a chance to square things up. 'How'll we get loose?"

"Them irons," says Jerry, 'is only soft iron. If we can get his bayonet, we can pry 'em open at the links.'

"It was dark by that time, an' in a few minutes Jerry says to me, nervous like, 'All ready, Jake.' I got up an' hopped across to the door, like a big toad, an' stood in the dark of it, an' Jerry begins to yell, in a whinin' voice, 'Señor! Señor!' Presently the guard comes to the door. 'Agua, agua,' says Jerry; 'agua, por amor de Dios!' I was sorry then I hadn't hit him at first, for I didn't like to hurt a man who was doin' me a good turn. But there wasn't no use arguin' like that now, so when he puts his head in the door I clips away at it, backin' up the blow with my body. I took him just here," pointing to the lower curve of the jaw-bone, "an' it lifted him half across the room, him fallin' in a heap. We grabbed him, but, Lord! he didn't move.

"Knocked out," says Jerry. 'He ain't dead,' says he, listenin' to his heart, 'but he won't raise no fuss to-night. We'd better tie him up, though.' So we took away his sword bayonet, gagged him an' tied him, an' then stuck him up outside the door so's to look like he was on guard. Then we set to work with the bayonet to pry off our irons. Of course we couldn't get the leg-irons off, so we pried open the links, an' in about a half an hour we was both of us loose.

"Take that rifle," says Jerry, 'an' give me the bayonet, an' we'll run for it. We'll head back for the mines, 'cause we've got nowhere else to go, an'—oh, come on!' says he.

"So we sneaked out of the house, an', keepin' in the dark side of the street, crept on toward the old road to the mountains. All would have gone tiptop if that captain had lived on the other side of the street, but he didn't. I heard a cuss from a man standin' in the door, and that Gonzalez, the captain, jumps out with a revolver. There wasn't no time to say please, so I whirled round the rifle, catchin' him in the belly with the stock, Jerry helpin' him out with a crack on the head. That eight miles goin' back was the best time I ever did. It took us an hour an' a half, an', let me tell you, it wasn't no fun runnin' with a half-pound o' loose iron jammin' an' rammin' against your ankle-bone at every step.

"When we got to the house, Mr. Mervin an' the others had just got back from their excursion, so I took him aside an' told him all. He thought for a minute, an' says, 'What's your advice, Pearson?"

"Well," says I, 'I'm better at actin' than advisin', but it seems to me we'd do best by sleepin' here an' gettin' out at dawn for Havana by the coast. What arms have you got, sir?"

"Is it as bad as that?" says he. 'Good God, there's my sister! How far is Havana?"

"About ninety miles, sir. We can do it in two days with the horses. How about the guns? I've a couple of Colts.'

"I've got one," says he, 'an' a pair of '66 model Winchesters. For heaven's sake, start soon.'

"I went down to the stables an' saddled three horses an' two of the mine mules, the likeliest I could get my hands on, an' just as the stars was palin' we set off down the trail toward Cardenas. The road branched about a mile down, an' me an' Jerry was ahead. We hadn't hardly turned into the coast-road when Mr. Mervin says, 'Oh, Pearson, come here a minute,' an' when I reined up my mule alongside him he says, 'Look yonder.' Half a mile down the road there was a cloud of brown dust risin', an' you could see the gleam of the bayonets along their front. I knowed at once they was troops from Cardenas sent to guard the mines. What we didn't know was that they had cavalry, till we seen a smaller dust-cloud part from the column an' come peltin' up the road after us.

"By God,' says Jerry, reinin' back, 'they're after us.'

"Mr. Mervin,' says I, 'if you'll push ahead with Miss May, Walker an' Jerry an' me 'll stand 'em off an' give you a start. You push on for Jibacoa, an' then make for the coast, lyin' up by night an' travellin' by day. Then get a boat an' put to sea. It's our only chance.'

"Suppose we surrender,' says he.

"Did you ever hear of Señor Quenzado's wife an' daughters, who was arrested by 'em on no charge at all?' says Jerry, quite low and quick.

"Mervin turned dead white. 'If it wasn't for the girl,' says he, 'I wouldn't do it; but I must, I suppose. Walker, you and May ride like the devil up the road, while we hold 'em if we can. Go now.'

"I'll be damned if I do,' says Walker. 'Go yourself. My place is here with Pearson and Black.' An' he took a hitch with his halter round his pony's legs, throwing him cleverly in the middle of the road. 'Look out, Pearson. There goes your mule;' for they had opened fire on us an' downed the old jack at the first fire.

"Here,' says I, pullin' out one of my Colts an' handin' it to Walker; 'it's good for a hundred yards with a rest. Keep five shots for them, an' the last for yourself if they catch us.'

"He took it an' whirled round the cylinder. 'I want to keep one of these little pills,' says he, 'for my friend Dr. Martinez.'

"He'll not need a second dose,' says Jerry, 'unless he's copper-lined.'

"Hurry up,' says I to Mervin, who was girthing Miss May's horse; 'they're gettin' ready to fire;' for I heard the words, 'Tira, mis hombres,' come down the wind to us.

"Mervin jumped for his horse, handin' his rifle to Walker, who opened fire on the Spaniards right away. 'Good-by, boys! Good luck! Come along, May,' says he. An' then there come the roar of a volley up the road, an' when I turned to see where they were, Miss May was lyin' a white spot in the middle of the road. I run to her an' picked her up, but it wasn't no use. I seen that right away. They was only two hundred yards off now, an' I laid her body, for she was stone-dead, over her horse an' cut Walker's pony loose. 'Come on, you fools,' says I: 'there's no use waitin' now.'

"Is she—? Is she——?" says Walker, lookin' at me like his brain would crack, but not darin' to finish the sentence.

"Yes," says I, 'she is. Get up, you fool, an' run.'

"Jerry jumped up an' swung into saddle, but there come another volley, an' Walker jumped three foot in air, come down on his face, an' lay quite still.

"This is madness," says Mervin, whisperin' to hisself. 'Only three now! Only three! Can your pony carry you an'—an' that?' says he, pointin' to what had been Miss May, as it lay before me on the saddle as we spurred up the path.

"He's got to," says I, beatin' him with my gun-butt.

"Two hundred yards took us to a turn in the trail, an' I turned in my saddle just in time to see Walker, that we all thought dead, jump to his feet an' pump shot after shot into the column not thirty feet away. Their two officers fell first, an' I seen four others go down like ninepins. Then he threw away his empty rifle an' starts runnin' to us, pistol in hand. They was so took by surprise that for a minute they didn't think of firin' at him. Then they fired, an' we seen him stagger along sidewise like a runnin' man does, tryin' to keep from fallin'. His hand went up to his head, his pistol cracked, an' he rolled over in the road, sendin' up a little cloud of dust as he fell.

"My God, Mr. Mervin," says I, 'did you see that?'

"Yes," says he, dazed like, rubbin' his hand across his face; 'but I don't understand.'

"Why," says Jerry, pushin' into the chaparral an' pullin' us after him, 'the fool was playin' possum so's to get even with 'em; an' he done it, too.'

"Good God, how foolish!" says Mervin. 'How plucky, but how foolish!' Then he broke down, an' begun to cry like a baby.

"We pushed on some two miles till we struck the cane thickets, where we could hear any one a mile away, an' we camped for the night. That was an awful night. Mr. Mervin he just sat alongside of—of what I'd carried in front of me on my saddle, an' talked an' laughed low to hisself. Jerry an' me looked at him, an' dug a hole in the swamp with some sticks, an' we buried her there, her that had been Miss May. That was at daybreak, an' then we pushed on for Jibacoa, Mr. Mervin ahead, not sayin' a word, then me, an' Jerry last.

"Presently I heard Jerry say, like he's talkin' to hisself, 'No, sir, I ain't a regular prayin' man. You know mighty well I ain't one o' these people what's always askin' for somethin'. I 'ain't asked ye nothin' for twenty years, an' if ye'll help me now I'll ask ye no more. Just put me face to face with Martinez at arm's length. You needn't help me, only don't help the dago, an' you'll see the damndest all-round killin'-bee since the time of Cain an' Abel.' I was nervous anyway, an' Jerry's prayer upset me, an' I sat down an' laughed like a crazy man, the others standin' round watchin' me, not movin' a muscle.

"By a miracle we made the coast, an' stole a boat, an' was picked up by a British bark bound for Savannah."

"What became of the others?" I asked.

"Why, four years later they went down in the Virginus, and

Mervin was shot with Fry's men in Morro Castle. Jerry he got away an' swum out to the British man-o'-war Niobe, lyin' in the harbor. Captain Lorraine,—he was a man, sir,—when he heard the firin', sent his men to quarters an' run out his guns, tellin' 'em that if a rat squeaked he'd shell the town."

"Where's Black now?" I asked.

"Went down there two years ago," rejoined Pearson. "I told him before he went he'd better take out papers as an English citizen, an' he did."

George Brydges Rodney.

THE INDIAN AFOOT.

THE rancher of the far West depends absolutely upon his horse as means of locomotion. When dismounted he cuts as clumsy a figure as does the sailor set ashore. His walk is likely to be a waddle, or, at best, a shuffle. The quadruped has become a complement to the biped, and a well-worn figure of speech, expressing sore predicament, is the man afoot.

Hence the rider possessed of some little imagination and gratitude not only loves the sturdy little beast which bears him, but comes to regard it with a sort of awe. All day long, on a diet of grass, over hill and across prairie, the bronco carries his burden of booted man and ponderous saddle. A touch of the spur, and the pony breaks into a canter. The air is like wine, and the rider, intoxicated with it, urges his horse still faster. There is a sense of freedom, of untrammelled motion through the spaces of the wilderness, which the horseman in the city does not know.

But when was man contented? Nature, the rider will reason, has treated him unfairly in making him the dependant of a shaggy mustang. Why was not he, the lord of creation, fitted with sinews and a frame which would enable him to roam these unconfined acres at will? What a fine thing it would be were the human machine so constructed that he could walk the earth the peer of a piebald bronco! Often, in feeling my own helplessness without a horse, I have asked myself the question, What would be the anatomy of the human being blessed with the endurance and travelling capacity of the meanest pony on the prairie? How large would be his lungs? How broad his chest? How great the girth of flank and calf?

The answer came unexpectedly, one day, and filled me with humiliation. Heretofore the only Indians with whom I had come in contact were the Sioux of Dakota,—Indians who live on horseback and who, on the whole, make a sorry showing as pedestrians. But the red man of New Mexico and Arizona is another being. As a pedestrian he fills the measure of historian Fiske's conjecture: "The ancestors of the Red Man doubtless made their way hither on foot during some one of the many periods when North America was joined both to Siberia and to Northern Europe."

The Indian who first demonstrated to me that a horse is essential only to a pampered child of civilization reached the pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico, one hot afternoon, with mail for the Presbyterian missionaries. That morning they had sent him on this errand to the post-office at the Mormon village of Ramah, some twenty miles distant, and, as his horse was not close at hand, he had made the journey there and back on foot. This, I learned, was an ordinary occurrence. As for the Indian's physique, it set me smiling at my mental picture of a human horse. The Zuni was rather undersized, and no one would have picked him out for an athlete. Yet he had accomplished with ease, and as a matter of course, a feat which would make his white brother boast for a lifetime. Afterwards I heard many stories—some of them entirely reliable—of the Pueblo Indian's prowess as a walker: how an old man of Zuni had fetched the mail from Fort Wingate—the journey both ways footing up fully eighty miles—between sunrise and sunset on a summer day; how the Moquis of Arizona would walk from their village to their irrigated lands, forty miles away, spend several hours in farming, and foot it back through the loose sand the same evening.

To one who comes to know these Indians, most of the stories are credible enough. Their religion and their traditions prescribe for them an unending series of out-of-door games and dances, which would make a sprinter of an invalid, if it did not kill him. Their lungs are as blacksmiths' bellows; they have hardly any superfluous flesh, and their hearts are in good working order. One of their pastimes is the sport known to them as *dee-kwa-we*, kicking the stick. For this their best runners are chosen and organized into two bands or "teams," some six Indians on each side, with captains to direct their movements and umpires on ponies to see that there is fair play. The game bears some resemblance to our own "shinny," the knur or "ball" propelled, painted red and black, being about six inches in length and whittled to a point at both ends; but, instead of a stick, the propelling power is the bare feet of the participants, who grasp the bit of wood with their toes and cast it from them with wonderful skill. The course commonly chosen was an imaginary circle of some twenty miles, beginning at Zuni, taking in Thunder Mountain, the great mesa to whose summit the Pueblos once retreated when harassed by the Spaniards, and back again to the village. The runners, encumbered only with breech-clouts, make their way through the sand and sage-brush, crossing arroyos, scrambling over rocks, and deftly picking up the stick with their toes from cactus and the mouths of prairie-dog holes. Each band has its own "ball;" the starting-line is likewise the goal, and the Indian who first kicks the stick across it wins the victory for his side. The time generally required for this performance is from four to five hours, the exercise being one which involves skill and endurance rather than speed.

But the Pueblos are not the only Indians who easily dispense with horses. Of all the red men who roam the plains, the Apache is the greatest peripatetic prodigy. Were not his endurance on foot established by the army records and by the testimony of the officers whom

he has served as scout in many a bloody campaign, the stories told of him would seem beyond belief. Walking has been described as "a series of interrupted falls," and scientists who have studied human locomotion will tell you that by keeping this in view and conforming the motion of legs and body thereto great distances may be covered with ease. There is unquestionably something in the theory. Travelers have noted the peculiar gait of the Indian burden-bearers in South and Central America and elsewhere, and have compared it with the "new art of walking" introduced some time ago into the French army, which is described as consisting "in not fully straightening up the leg at the moment when it is perpendicular to the ground, and in dragging out the leg that remains behind to its full length."

Whether or not all this may be learned and practised by any one who takes the pains, the Apache's gait—neither a walk nor a run—is but one element of his performance. From a child he has lived out of doors, awake and asleep, and both nature and the needs of warfare have contributed to his bigness of chest and strength of limb. Breathing the rarefied air of the country he inhabits, and inured to every form of hardship, he will make shift to live and fight on a diet of acorns, mescal, and prairie-dogs, and he has even been known to enrich his larder with the lizard of the desert.

These scouts, when in the service of Crook and other Indian fighters, were never mounted. Yet, burdened with rifle and ammunition, canteen and knife, they would make détours from the cavalry command, rejoining it at the end of a hard day's march, without showing signs of distress, while not only the cavalry horses but the troopers who bestrode them would be fagged out; this, too, day after day, under a scorching sun, over burning sands and across rough country, often making a dozen miles at a stretch without stopping to rest.

General Crook is quoted by Mr. Edward S. Ellis as having seen an Apache lope for fifteen hundred feet up the side of a mountain without showing the least sign of fatigue, there being no perceptible increase of respiration. Captain H. L. Scott, of the Seventh Cavalry, has related some astonishing feats performed by the Chiracahua Apaches forming Troop L of his regiment. He tells how nine of these Indians, after a hard day's work, by way of recreation pursued a coyote for two hours, captured the nimble brute, and brought it into camp, and how, on another occasion, the scouts gave chase to a deer, ran it down some nine miles from camp, and fetched it in alive. Hence I see no good reason for doubting the word of an old-timer I met in the Rocky Mountains who told me that, in the days before the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad was built, the Pima Indians of Arizona would recover settlers' stray horses, along the overland trail, by walking them down in the course of two or three days.

After this, one may begin to believe that "Lying Jim" Beckwourth, whose remarkable adventures early in this century are preserved in book form, was a much maligned man, and that he spoke no more than the truth when he said he had known instances of Indian runners accomplishing upwards of one hundred and ten miles in one

day. Beckwourth, in dictating his experiences to Mr. T. D. Bonner for publication, recited this circumstance to sustain the story of his own race for life while tracking stolen horses, one morning, in the Snake River country. He was discovered and pursued by several hundred Blackfoot Indians, and immediately crossed the stream and made for camp at Blackfoot Buttes. Here, to his horror, he discovered that Sublet's party, having found no water, had proceeded to the river, forty-five miles distant. Beckwourth followed their trail, and reached the camp at nightfall, ahead of his pursuers. He estimates that he ran, in all, ninety-five miles, and calls the survivors of Sublet's company to correct him publicly if he is in error concerning the distance.

Indeed, there are records which seem to justify the tale. It is true that the Greek soldier who ran all the way from Marathon to Athens, to bear the news of victory, and dropped dead when he had delivered the message, had covered only twenty-six miles; yet he may have been worn with fighting when he started. On the other hand, Deerfoot, the Indian runner of the Cattaraugus reservation, who once held the record in England and America, ran twelve miles in fifty-six minutes, in London, in 1861; and extraordinary stories of his long-distance running are told. Captain Barclay, of England, walked a thousand miles in a thousand hours, and W. S. George, the world's greatest amateur distance runner, followed the hounds on foot. Henry Schmel, in June, 1894, walked from Springfield, Illinois, to Chicago, one hundred and eighty-eight miles, in sixty-nine hours and fifty minutes. In 1892, Schneidereit, an Austrian printer, finding himself in Calcutta without means, walked all the way home to his native town, Rathenow, travelling on foot for two years across India, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, Southern Russia, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Hungary, and thence into Austria.

But these instances, which might be multiplied, are for the most part feats accomplished under special conditions or stress of circumstances, or by picked men. In Apache-land every Indian is a runner, asking no odds of earth or weather; and whether it be the peaceful Pueblo, trudging to his irrigated lands, forty miles and back, or the venomous Chiracahua, tamed to do service for Uncle Sam, the Man on Horseback may well regard him with amazement.

William Trowbridge Larned.

LOST IDEALS.

DEAR fanciful guests at a child's lone feast,
Must I lose you at last in life's mystical East,
Where the dreams of my childhood disappear
Like stars that fade as the day draws near?
Or again, when the evening of life comes on
Shall I find, like the stars, I but fancied you gone?

Florence Radcliffe.

THE SACRED FLOWER.

THERE is hardly a flower that has not its nook in the pantheon, but, of all blossoms, the rose has had most honor in the religions of the world. Nor can we wonder that it is so. The beauty of the rose is matchless, and man ever makes the material thing he most esteems the symbol of the deity he most adores.

The Hebrew poets sang of the rose, as Solomon in the Song of Songs: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley." But there was among the rabbins a distinctly religious veneration for the rose; they even made it the symbol of the Shekinah, the flame of God's presence. The Kabbala reveals this clearly. In the Zohar (Aemor) it is written,—

"Quod sicut rosa crescit ad aquas et emittit odorem bonum, sic Malchuth hoc gaudet nomine, cum influxum assugit a Binah quæ bonum elevat odorem."

Thus the sacred rose, the supreme flower of light, was made the sign of God's presence, its gentle glories the exponent of the tremendous splendors of the Infinite.

The like symbolism continued in the new dispensation. Christ was typified by the rose. According to the explanation of St. Jerome, the word Nazareth means a flower, and Nazareth was situated in Carmel, the garden of God. There was, then, a peculiar appropriateness in the loving designation of Jesus as the Flower of the Garden, the Rose of the World. An extension of the imagery made the red rose represent the white blossom sprinkled with the Redeemer's blood.

In the cultus of the Virgin Mary the rose soon found a distinguished place, and it was characteristic of her, as the lily was of St. Joseph. Both the white and the red rose were devoted to her worship, and their religious worth was formally set forth by St. Dominic when he instituted the rosary.

Indeed, Christian fancy has not hesitated to make the rose a theme for much explication of divine truths. Perhaps the most charming effort in this direction was that of St. Basil, though he borrowed the thought from the East. He tells us that in the sinless age roses bloomed from thornless stems. Then sin entered into the world, men waxed corrupt, and the rose-stem put forth thorns, as if to guard itself from the vile hands that would gather it.

Dante, too, has made use of the rose in his Divine Comedy, employing it, after the fashion of the Kabbala, as the habitation of God in paradise:

How wide the leaves,
Extended to their utmost, of this rose,
Whose lowest step embosoms such a space
Of ample radiance! Yet nor amplitude
Nor height impeded, but my view with ease
Took in the full dimension of that joy.
Near or remote, what there avails, where God

Immediate rules, and Nature, awed, suspends
 Her sway within the yellow of the rose
 Perennial, which, in bright expansiveness,
 Lays forth its gradual blooming, redolent
 Of praises to the never-wintering sun?

Probably Dante gained his poetical conception of this heavenly rose from the Tamara Pua of the Brahmins. According to this Oriental symbolism, a silver rose is made the representation of God's presence. In the garden of paradise ever blooms a silver rose. This supernal flower contains the images of two women, yet these two are one. The one manifestation of the woman is called the Lady of the Mouth, the other the Spirit of Tongues. In the heart of the flower is the permanent home of God himself.

The mystical rose in the heavenly garden is to be found again and again in the religious legends of the world. One tradition declares that the Buddha was crucified because he ventured to pluck a flower. There is much vagueness as to the exact kind of flower, and, as a result of the uncertainty, his avatar is symbolized sometimes by the lily, or the podma, but often by the rose. The Hindoos assert that Indra was crucified for daring to rob paradise of a rose.

One name of the rose, *frute del arbor*, suggests another direction to our researches as to the religious rose, and the results of the investigation are especially delightful. This exploration brings us to our own continent. The Peruvian legend of the fall of man made Eve sin by plucking a rose in the garden. There is an evident connection between this and the old Mexican belief. The Mexican Eve received, after the fall, an angelic visitor, who declared to her that she should bear a son destined to bruise with his heel the fatal serpent. This messenger bestowed upon Eve a rose, in token of the divine promise, and an age of roses straightway came upon all the earth.

The origin of St. Basil's conceit concerning the rose-stem is to be found in the Boun-Dehesch of Zoroaster, which involves the rose in the events of the fall: the stem was without thorns until Ahriman, the principle of evil, entered on the scene. Zoroaster also tells that every angel has his flower, and that the rose belongs to one of the highest of all, an archangel ever by the throne of God.

In a general way, the rose has appeared to some extent in the symbolism of all the ancient nations. The Chinese employed it, and the Egyptians made it prominent. Ordinarily it has represented femininity, and this signification may be traced from the monuments beside the Nile to the tremendous ruins in Central America. Naturally, it was the distinctive flower of many goddesses, from Venus to the Scandinavian Hulda, termed the Frau Rosa.

A favorite tradition as to the origin of the rose makes it the earth's crown of glory, first assumed when Venus was born of the wave's foam. At the moment of her birth, the first rose-shoot sprang from the delighted ground; on the tiny sprig the gods sprinkled nectar,—and, behold, the rose!

But there is no end to the traditions that deal with the rose's first cause. Perhaps the earliest Greek legend is that in which the dainty

flower grew from the blood the wounded Adonis shed, while the mourning Venus's tears formed the anemones. One of the most emphatic of all fabled tales as to the rose's genesis is the story that it was given in answer to Flora's prayers. She found the most beautiful of her nymphs dead, and in her grief she besought the gods to make the dead body the queen of flowers. Her sorrow so moved the immortal company that all bestirred themselves in Flora's behalf. Apollo gave his liveliest beams, Bacchus supplied the nectar, Vertumnus granted the perfume, Pomona provided the fruit, while Flora herself ingeniously contrived a diadem of flowers. The result of such divine efforts has forever since been the loveliest of blossoms in the sight of gods and men.

Alchemy made the rose one of its chief secret signs. In this use it was ordinarily the symbol of light, the condensation of which was the philosopher's stone, the true essence of gold. One possible origin of the alchemical meaning of the rose is to be found in Herodotus. The historian states that Midas, the Phrygian king, had a garden of roses, and each rose in this garden had sixty petals. The rose was sacred to Bacchus, and it was Bacchus who gave to Midas the means for the transmutation of metals.

It would be useless to attempt an enumeration of the poetical passages in which roses are famed, in connection either with deities or with mere mortals. Homer began the use when he sang of rosy-fingered Aurora, and when he described Aphrodite as perfuming the body of Hector with attar of roses.

Sappho vowed in rhythm that the rose was queen of all flowers, and Anacreon, Bion, Theocritus, Apollodorus, and every poet since their time have joined in the chorus of praise. Often the tales of the rose gave it a certain magical value, as where Lucius, in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, is restored to human form by eating a wreath of roses.

The poetical insistence of the rose as the symbol of silence had its origin in a quasi-religious employment. After the original dedication of the rose to Aphrodite, Cupid delivered it over to Harpocrates, the god of silence, in the hope that by this means the amours of the goddess of love might be kept secret.

Religion and poetry have united to make the Persian stories the most exquisite of all that owe their origin to the rose. The Persians have a feast of roses, beginning when the buds first open and continuing throughout the season. The Bulbul Nameh lauds the rose as God's own flower, and adds that he has set the nightingale to keep ward over it. Whensoever a rose is plucked, the bird gives forth a cry, the sweetest and the saddest cry that mounts to heaven. In the spring-time the nightingale hovers over the fragrant petals until it swoons in a perfumed ecstasy. Nor is the flower less faithful than the bird, for it does not bloom until the nightingale sings to the bud. Then at the marvellous strains the flower unfolds its glories to the waiting air.

Marvin Dana.

DO ANIMALS DRINK?

"**A**RE we going to drink like men or like beasts?" Sheridan asked one day, as a number of congenial spirits took their seats around the board.

"Like men," was the universal response, spoken with a slight tinge of indignation.

"Then we are going to get jolly drunk; for beasts drink only to slake their thirst; men never know when they have had enough."

Nevertheless, Sheridan was wrong. Like all humorists, he was careless of his facts, so he could only raise a laugh. Animals do drink. Many of them have a natural and some an acquired taste for liquor. They enjoy it as men enjoy it; they suffer as men suffer from its after-effects. They acquire jags, they have a roaring good time, they suffer from katzenjammer and delirium tremens: they even die of the rum habit.

Nature has her rum-shops, her saloons. She produces plants which devote themselves to the manufacture and sale of intoxicants. The South-American toddy-tree is well known to naturalists. It is well known also to the South-American beetle the *Oryctes Hercules*. When the latter goes on a spree he never goes it alone, after the unneighborly habit of the human drunkard. He collects his friends and acquaintances to the number of thirty or forty; the whole crowd run their short horns through the bark of the toddy-tree, revel in the out-flowing juices, and, while inebriated, are easily caught by the human natives.

The toddy-tree parts with its liquor free of charge. There are other plants which are less generous. They exact no less a penalty than the death of the unfortunate drunkard. And what do they do with the body? Strange as it may seem, they eat it. In this manner they obtain the food which nourishes them and sustains their healthful existence.

At the end of each of their long green leaves these plants have a pitcher-shaped receptacle. We might style this the growler; but it never needs to be rushed. It is always full of what with special appropriateness might be called bug-juice,—a watery liquor, sweet to the taste and inebriating to the senses. Only in fine weather is the growler open for business. On rainy days it is firmly shut up to keep out the rain that would dilute and spoil the contents. Nature's saloon-keepers do not water their stock.

Let us imagine a fine day and a thirsty bug. It makes little difference what the bug may be: ants, flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, all sorts of insects, are the plant's customers. His bugship is out for a morning cocktail or an after-dinner *pousse-café*. He walks along the leaves till he reaches the growler. He crawls in, swigs and swigs. Ten to one he never gets out alive. His body is gradually consumed and absorbed by his traitorous entertainer.

Another variety of vegetable rum-shops have larger growlers, which do not close up during rain-storms. Consequently their liquor is of a weaker variety; but it is quite strong enough for the object the plant has in view, which is merely to attract custom. When the patron has once crawled into the growler, he finds it difficult to crawl out again. He may not be very boozy; he is only "feeling good," whatever may be the equivalent for that term in bug-language. But the inside of the growler is lined with strong hairy projections, all pointing downward towards the liquor and not upward towards the brim. *Facilis descensus Averni*. Here is an excellent moral for the temperance orator,—a suggestion for an admirable metaphor. Like the human drunkard, the poor bug found the step downward an easy one. But, once in the toils of the demon, he cannot extricate himself. He makes useless struggles. At last he falls exhausted into the liquor and is miserably drowned.

Most of the higher animals—as monkeys, elephants, bears, horses, and dogs—have a natural fondness for fermented liquors, and suffer from the abuse of these liquors as men do. From the book of Macabees it is evident that war-elephants were maddened of old with new wine, as they have been and are with arrack down to the present time. Managers of menageries and employees at the various zoological gardens know that the elephants under their care are prepared to go on a wild drunk whenever opportunity offers. Whiskey is officially given them when they are ill or low,—the quantity varying from five to ten gallons, according to the requirements of the case. This is put into their drinking-water. Bears and monkeys drink beer like German students, and love whiskey equally well. In Africa the natives make use of this evil trait to capture their poor relations. The monkeys there are extremely fond of a beer brewed by the natives. So the latter place quantities of the liquor within easy reach of the monkeys, and wait until their victims are thoroughly befuddled. In this state they are unable to recognize the difference between negro and ape. When the negro takes the hand of one of them to lead him off, a second monkey takes the hand of the first, a third that of the second, and so on. A single negro may sometimes be seen carrying off a string of staggering monkeys. Fresh doses of beer in decreasing quantities are administered to the captives, so that they may only gradually awaken to the sad results of their spree.

Magnand and Challand, two famous French physicians, have studied the effects of alcohol on the dog and found that it is essentially the same as on man. The first dose makes him very lively and demonstrative, but in the end he becomes awkward and unsteady on his legs, his eyes grow dim, and at last he falls into a deep sleep, from which he awakens sick and fretful.

The persistent use of brandy has been found to develop in dogs as well as in other animals a mental derangement similar to delirium tremens. The victims are subject to all sorts of hallucinations. At first these occur only in the dark. A dog to which Magnand had administered large doses of brandy for four weeks began to howl piteously at night as if attacked, and became quiet only when a light

was brought. After another week he saw his hobgoblins even in daylight, when he would run around biting and snapping at the empty air, skulking away with piteous whines, as though chased by an enemy too terrible to encounter.

Another physician, a kindly soul living in the city of Montpellier, made extensive experiments to ascertain the effects of wine, brandy, and absinthe on fowls. To a chick they showed themselves apt disciples. Many an old rooster was equal to his bottle a day. But the toppers, unlike their human brethren, lost flesh speedily, especially those who drank absinthe. Two months of absinthe sufficed to kill the strongest rooster, the most Amazonian hen. Brandy was less immediately fatal: the fowls which indulged in that alone lasted four months and a half, while wine-drinkers pure and simple enjoyed a good time for full ten months. Alcohol affected not only the health of these feathered toppers, but their personal appearance also. The combs of the roosters, like the noses of human subjects, swelled up to a preternatural size and assumed a brighter hue of carmine.

It was suggested at the time that the doctor should continue his experiments, and, by the introduction of the teapot into the hen-house, find out whether there is any ground for the suspicion entertained in some quarters as to the innocent properties of tea. A few experiments also in "late hours" were urged upon him, and social reformers fondly imagined that one week of political reunions, concerts, balls, and crushes might possibly be found as disastrous in its effects as two months of absinthe-drinking.

Inquiry among New York horse-owners shows that there are many horses which are addicted to drink, especially among those gigantic animals driven by brewers. Accustomed to malt as food, they easily acquire a liking for the fermented juice of the malt. They grow stout, like the veteran beer-bibbers. One driver has a horse which has grown so observant that he stops before every beer-saloon on his route, in expectation of a treat. Often he comes home heavily loaded, for he has many human friends who are willing to "set 'em up" for him. If the driver is in a hurry, he has to exercise great ingenuity in selecting back streets to dodge the saloons.

Judge Stechler, of New York, was once called upon to decide a very curious case. The plaintiff brought suit to recover the value of a horse which, in a spirit of the keenest satire, had been named Old Temperance. "Old Temperance" was fond of a quiet jag. When his owner gave up the carting business he determined to dispose of the horse by a raffle. A crowd gathered to enjoy the sport. The raffle was to occur in a saloon. But as the drinks went round "Old Temperance" was not slighted. He grew lively. Finally one of the crowd jumped upon his back and rode him at a terrific rate around the block. A mob of howling boys followed and pelted the horse with missiles. Just as "Old Temperance" was rounding the home stretch, he suddenly stopped, throwing his rider off his back, and with one loud neigh fell dead.

"He didn't say neigh in time," quoth one of his spectators. At which facile jest there was a general laugh.

In Norfolk, Virginia, is—or was—a famous parrot known as Markoe. The owner is a lady who purchased it from a sailor and speedily discovered that he showed all the convivial habits of his former master. "Under the influence" Markoe is so clever and amusing that visitors often beg the privilege of offering him a glass. The servants, too, in spite of repeated orders, find delight in making him drunk.

Once Markoe got delirious on champagne given him by a member of the family. He cut up such pranks that his mistress shouted to him, "You're drunk, sir, and had better go away." Markoe slunk away in disgrace to a hiding-place, and there slept off his jag. Soon after a visitor came to call on Mrs. T. As he took his seat he was surprised to hear a severe displeased voice saying, "You're drunk, sir, and had better go away." The voice was that of the hostess. The visitor knew not whence it came, but snatched up his hat and rushed from the room as Mrs. T. was entering it. Mrs. T. had heard her words repeated; she knew at once that it was the parrot, and was overwhelmed with confusion at what the visitor would think. Judge of her surprise when, a little later, as she had sat down to pen a profuse apology, a servant brought her a letter from the gentleman. He humbly acknowledged that he had taken a little too much for dinner, but he had not known that the fact was apparent, and begged for forgiveness, which was freely granted.

A lady of Joliet, Illinois, is the owner of another dissipated pet. This is a crow whose fondness for liquor has earned him the name of Budge. He likes beer and whiskey, and will drink until he gets dizzy. Then he will squat down by the glass and now and then stick his bill in the liquor.

Still another feathered drunkard is a resident of Lebanon, Tennessee. Perhaps drunkard is a harsh epithet, for the awful example in question was drunk but once, and reformed as soon as he sobered down. He is a large screech-owl known as Billy, who has taken up his abode in a tree close to the windows of little Eddie T. Billy is devoted to the child, follows him around all day, and at night sits on the railing of his bed until the little fellow has dropped off to sleep, when he flies away to attend to his own business. Once Eddie fell sick, and the doctor ordered him to be stimulated with whiskey toddy. A day or two later, as Mrs. T. was engaged in her household duties, she heard a strange disturbance in the sick-room,—loud screeches followed by a kind of hoarse chuckling, a wild fluttering of wings, and then her son's voice calling her. She ran in alarm to his room, and there found Billy pirouetting about on the floor in a mad whirl of drunkenness. He had evidently got at the whiskey. When he caught sight of the lady, he flew at her with distended claws, and drove her from the room. Then he continued his dance, interrupting it now and then to dash himself angrily against the different pieces of furniture, as if he detected a personal enemy in each. Finally his furious *pas seul* became an idiotic reeling about the room. Chuckling and clucking like an old hen, his head tucked to one side and leering at the ceiling, he spent a merry half-hour, and then, tired out, fell over in

an undignified heap. He was put out on the lawn to sleep it off. Waking up a few hours later in a very bedraggled condition, he crept away, and was not seen for several days. Since that time he has been humble and quiet, and extremely cautious about what he eats and drinks. If anything is offered him in a glass, he ruffles up his feathers and flies out of the room in a fit of virtuous indignation.

A curious story of a fish drunkard went the rounds of the papers some years ago. It was told with all circumstantial detail, even to the name of the owner. We will summarize it, and leave the reader to be the judge of its credibility. The fish, a large brook sucker, was caught in Clinton County, Pennsylvania, in May, 1889, named Old Tom, and placed in a small fish-pond. It soon became used to its new surroundings, fraternized with the goldfish who were its only companions, and grew to be as tame as they. Its manner of feeding, by extending its queer snout and sucking in anything that came within its reach, was the cause of great amusement to all spectators. One day its owner tried an experiment. He bought a small nursing-bottle, filled it with milk, and attached a long tube to it with the usual mouth-piece. Dropping the tube into the water in front of the sucker's nose, the fish gradually sucked in the mouth-piece and took a gulp of the milk. But he evidently did not like it, for he spat it out at once. Mr. S. had another idea. He tried lager beer. Old Tom took a gulp, and seemed delighted. Indeed, he sucked half the contents of the bottle before he let go his hold. Then he cavorted around the pond and had a high old time with the other fishes. After half an hour of this sport he moved to one side of the pond, close to the bank, and remained there all the rest of the day, scarcely moving, even when prodded with a stick. Evidently the beer had affected the sucker, and he was suffering the penalty. But next day he was all right again and eager for more beer, which was accordingly given him. He swigged a larger dose than ever, got "as full as a tick," chased the other fishes around the pond, and indulged in a series of drunken somersaults on the surface of the water.

He had grown used to liquor now. He was no longer broken up, though it was evident enough his coppers were hot by the avidity with which he next morning took a dose of milk punch which S. had thought would sit well on his stomach. But the morning jag thus acquired proved a hummer. Old Tom dashed around, spoiling for a row, and, finding that the other fishes got hastily out of reach, grabbed a big crawfish by the tail and tried to suck him in. The crawfish resented the familiarity, and struck out with his claws. Old Tom was scared, and let go. The crawfish still clung on, and could be shaken off only after the liveliest sort of a tussle.

Old Tom, now sobered down completely, retired behind a big stone and remained in remorseful contemplation till afternoon. Again he sallied forth, and S., seeing that he was looking for a ball, kindly furnished him more beer, which set him off again in a wild fit of intoxication. Next morning he looked so seedy that S. mixed him a cocktail. Evidently it went to the right spot. Old Tom was himself again at once. But from that period his doom was sealed.

Every morning he came up for his nip, and if he did not get it tore around like a madman. Beer got too mild for him, and whiskey was substituted.

For three months he was kept continually loaded. Then S. tried to break him of his evil ways. First he diluted the morning dram, then he shut it off entirely. But in a day or two Old Tom showed strange symptoms. He would glare wild-eyed about him. He would take precipitous flight from imaginary foes and hide behind stumps, peeking out from his ambush in evident terror.

"He's got the jams," cried S.: "I've shut off his liquor too quickly."

Hastily rushing for the bottle, he gave Old Tom a corker. It needed three doses, however, to straighten him out and quiet his nerves. After that S. did not dare to shut off the liquor again. But continual drunkenness began to tell on Old Tom. He grew bleary-eyed, bloated, and seedy. He had lost his interest in life, he had forfeited his self-respect. His old-time companions shunned him and gave him a wide berth. He seemed keenly sensitive to his degradation. At last, one morning, after he had been drinking heavily, he moved over towards the big stone which he had made his lounging-place since society in the pond had ostracized him. For a few minutes he gazed at it in a curious way, then he made a sudden dash forward and hurled himself against the stone. A moment later his lifeless body was floating on the surface of the pond.

"He had committed suicide," S. says, "as sure as his name was Tom."

William S. Walsh.

THE ELECTION AT CAYOTE.

THERE are towns and towns. Cayote was not an old town, nor was it a new town; it was that species peculiar to the far Southwest, a lively mining camp translated into a dead village. It claimed to be a manufacturing centre, but, like many another claim, it did not pan out according to assay. The town's manufactures consisted of a woollen-mill, a foundry, a system of water-works, and a bank. Curtis, the cashier of the bank, and a handful of other new-comers pointed with commendable pride to these improvements, and claimed all the credit therefor, but the old-timers looked on the innovations with suspicion strongly tinged with contempt. And the old-timers were in the majority. They spoke slightly of the improvements, and not without reason. The water-works had never paid expenses; the dividends on the woollen-mill stock were still something the future held in store; the foundry was but an overgrown blacksmith-shop. But the bank paid. That was a good investment—first-class. Curtis said so, and if Curtis didn't know, who did?

But this was not all. The advent of these things brought many other new schemes and theories. There were two churches and a diminutive cohort of the Salvation Army. To the churches—as churches

—the pioneers did not object, but they deeply disapproved of the doctors of divinity who officiated. This sentiment was reciprocal.

That the pioneers had their vices is not to be denied. They drank, they played cards, and they swore with frequency and vehemence,—all of which, according to Curtis and the two eminent divines, assured eternal torment. The pioneers had no objections to the theories the trio thrust at them and tried to hammer into them, but when it was proposed to abolish these ancient amusements their protests were loud and their language profane. They referred to the clergymen in uncomplimentary terms, and revived the memory of one Father McGrath, the first priest in camp, a gentle, kindly man, who played cards with the boys until he became known in the county as the “poker-playing parson;” an earnest, noble man, who nursed the boys when sick, and buried them when they died; a priest whose catholicism knew no petty sects, but was great enough to cheer the dying sinner with words of comfort; and when, in an unsuccessful attempt to save Dutch Joe’s worthless life, he laid down his own, the boys sent to Phoenix for a marble shaft on which was fairly chiselled, “A Parson—But a Man.” But they hung his slayer first.

The apostles of reform were rampant. The two clerical gentlemen said, both from the pulpits and on the street-corners, that Cayote was a modern Sodom and Gomorrah, and that unless the wickedness ceased they would not be surprised at the destruction of the town after the manner of the two cities aforesaid. They quoted passages from the Old Testament to substantiate these views. But the pioneers disrespectfully said that the two clergymen had subsisted too long upon a diet of dried fruit and soda-crackers; and the pioneers didn’t take much stock in prophecies anyway. They cited the instance of the Arizona Kid, an Apache youth who claimed to have miraculous powers, and who prophesied that the bullets of the white man would prove harmless; but a bullet from a Colt’s 44 in the hands of an irreverent pagan of a cow-puncher had brought the prophet to the ground and his prophecies to naught.

Now between Cayote and a neighboring hamlet called Pilot Rock there had long existed an intense rivalry. In the old days, before the railroad was built, when Whispering Johnson (whose whispers could be heard for six miles) freighted behind a team of twelve obstinate mules of dubious ownership, when lives were cheap and whiskey four bits a drink, this rivalry was a matter not only of local pride, but of personal hatred. The man from Pilot Rock who recklessly ventured into Cayote was certain to receive a welcome he would remember—and bear the marks of—to his grave, and but few of the Cayote men who strayed into the Rock came back to tell of the greetings they received. Dutch Joe escaped with his life, but he bore upon his person the feathers from twenty-three grouse, deftly intermixed with half a barrel of tar, and men called him “The Buzzard” thereafter. When news reached Cayote that Joe Gannon, the enterprising proprietor of the Élite saloon at Pilot Rock, had at great expense imported a piano for the further delectation of his patrons, a committee of fifty organized, went to the town with the mineralogical name, and forcibly converted that piano into a tangled

chaos of twisted wire and kindling-wood. The mortality among the raiders was heavy, but, as Hank Judson expressed it, "We gits three of them 'Rockers,' an' that there pianner was shore sp'iled, anyways." A candidate for legislative honors was nearly mobbed by an infuriated populace because he had the temerity to say that the Rock was a "pretty good camp;" and to tell a Cayote citizen that he looked like a "Rocker" was to bring out every gun in camp and shock the statisticians who prepared the mortuary tabulations for insurance companies. And it is of record that a horse-thief had been pardoned and made much of because he said that in personal appearance and habits the denizens of the Rock compared unfavorably with the Digger Indians. Thus the word went forth that all manner of uncleanness abode at the Rock.

Therefore, when Curtis and the two eminent divines held up the Rock as a fitting model for Cayote, and referred to the "Rockers" as enlightened and progressive persons, they touched the honor of Cayote very nearly, and a riot was averted only by the fact that the perpetrators of the slander carried no weapons. But Whispering Johnson sat on a beer-keg in front of the saloon, and, by a judicious use of his Winchester, in twenty minutes had shot away the gilded weathercock on the spire of the church and nearly amputated the spire itself, which act was referred to as "sacrilegious vandalism."

It should be understood that a small town differs from a large town in other things than population. It is not a miniature, nor are the people the same, either in society or in business. The bank cashier in the city is an insignificant nobody, a mere clerk who is considered worthy of trust; but in the village he is the arbiter of fate, the incarnation of importance. Does a man think of embarking on a business venture, he communes earnestly with the cashier of his village bank. Does he aspire to an office, he enlists the services of the bank cashier. The bank cashier is the local deity. Next to him in influence comes the mayor. He also is the exerciser of an all-pervading authority. He is no mere figure-head, for he not only enforces the laws, but makes most of them. He is hampered by no division in an aldermanic board; he is legislature, judiciary, and executive in one. When the powers of mayor and bank cashier are centred in one man, that man wields an authority not second to the Czar's. And Curtis was cashier of the bank and mayor of the town.

So when Curtis, aided and abetted by the two clerical gentlemen, enforced his threats by arresting Whispering Johnson on the charge of wilfully and maliciously defacing a building, a whirl of indignation arose among the pioneers; but when their friend was fined ten dollars for committing mayhem on a church, and a tax of ten more was exacted for "cussin' the court," their rage was boundless. Something had to be done; the power of Curtis must be curtailed. The pioneers had hitherto kept out of politics; they did not care who was mayor, providing he let them and their pet amusements alone. But Curtis had interfered with them in the most reprehensible manner; therefore must Curtis be abolished. The solution was simple. Curtis had been elected a year before without opposition; opposition would be developed sufficient to result in the smashing of Curtis. Thus reasoned the

simple-minded pioneers. Missouri John voiced their sentiments when he said,—

"This yere little man Curtis an' them gospel sharks is too gay. I'm a law-abidin' citerzin an' all that, but when I want to cuss, I cuss. Whisperin' got cinched fer ten dollars 'cause he calls this yere Curtis a dam' fool, which he is. 'F I kain't call a dam' fool a dam' fool in this man's town, it's time I goes where I kin. This yere Curtis has jest nachelly got to be ki-boshed."

It is one thing to give a man power, but it is quite another thing to take that power from him, and so the pioneers speedily found. Two strong parties formed, and the nominees for the mayoralty were J. Henry Curtis and "Yankee" James Huffman. Two hundred and sixteen voters were in the town, so evenly divided that a change of ten votes would elect. At the outset of the campaign the pioneers were taken somewhat aback by the political tactics of the bank cashier. He introduced several novel and startling features in his campaign. He engineered torchlight processions with plenty of Roman candles and sky-rockets; he held big meetings in "Liberty Hall," and he pulled wires dexterously. The customers at the bank were sounded, and those in favor of "law and order" received accommodations, while those inclining toward Yankee Jim and "personal liberty" were told that money was tight and that loans were being called in. This remarkable state of affairs had its effect. Several of the old settlers deserted the standard of the pioneers and shamelessly took sides with the adherents of Curtis. They wanted "accommodations." The five men in the foundry and the sixteen in the woollen-mill were whipped into line and bidden to vote for law and order. So the campaign progressed merrily.

The fight seemed to narrow down to a personal battle between Curtis and Yankee Jim. The latter was not versed in the delicate art of wire-pulling, nor was he an orator. But he was more than popular. Not that Curtis was unpopular, but the opinion prevailed in Cayote that he "lugged on too much dog." Then he was a tender-foot, and that was a handicap. But he was confident. "Be beaten by a shaggy old moss-back like Yankee Jim? Never!" The two clergyman took up the refrain and chorussed, "Never." They held forth on the sidewalks and in the churches, pleading and praying with their erring brethren to "cease from evil doing and stamp out this foul blot upon their fair city."

When this remark came to the ears of the pioneers, a meeting was held and Yankee Jim was delegated to speak to the clergymen. He called upon them and conferred mightily, using many strong words. "If you speak of us boys yere as a 'foul blot' again," said Jim, as the conference ended, "you'll go to the bottom leakin', young man. Now you yere me." Whereupon these excellent persons let it be generally understood that the lawless element had begun a course of intimidation, and had threatened the two eminent divines with great bodily harm because of speaking out against the devices of Belial. When this became known, Jim swore oaths of weird construction and stupendous proportions. But he was not idle. His mode of canvassing

was peculiar. He did not obtrude himself upon the voters; he did not harangue them upon the street-corners nor in Liberty Hall; but he would catch them one at a time and invite them to have something with him. They never refused. Then when the "something" had been followed by another of the same, he would tell his auditor strange tales of the ancient feud between Pilot Rock and Cayote; he would dilate upon the low order of intelligence common to the "Rockers," and enthuse upon the superiority of Cayote in every particular. He thus succeeded in creating a more than pardonable pride in Cayote and an enthusiastic hatred of all that pertained in any wise to the Rock. Hatred is the easiest sentiment to inspire, and by the time election came the Cayote citizens were ready to march *en masse* to Pilot Rock and erase it from the map.

On the day before the election was to be held, Yankee Jim's face was wrinkled into a beaming smile, and Whispering Johnson was noticed to slap his knee with great emotion and give vent to a series of howls expressive of his satisfaction. This excited comment, for Johnson was not a demonstrative man, save on great occasions. Then he was hilariously violent. None knew the cause of his present exhilaration, though many had tried with honeyed words and seductive flatteries to obtain his confidence. Curtis saw him and immediately voiced the opinion that the enthusiast was drunk; the two parsons proclaimed it a disgusting exhibition and called Johnson a vessel of wrath. But the vessel of wrath hooted at them derisively. He was drunk—but not of alcohol. It was pure joy; and he gloried in his excess.

On the heels of this came the news that Yankee Jim had challenged Curtis to a joint debate. Curtis accepted the challenge gleefully, never doubting his ability to tear his rival's arguments to tatters and pulverize the tatters without mercy. Two o'clock came, and the speakers mounted a platform improvised from two doors and eight empty whiskey-barrels. The crowd stood expectant. Curtis, much to his disgust, was forced to speak first. He was not a man of imposing presence, being but little over five feet high, but he had all the tricks of the country debating society, and was fond of long words. For an hour and twenty minutes he hurled polysyllables at the dense heads of that unappreciative crowd, concluding thus:

"Therefore, gentlemen, I solicit your franchises. Not that I want the office for myself, but I ask them as the representative of good government, law and order, morality and religion."

Then Yankee Jim rose, all six feet of him, and a murmur of surprise ran through the assembly. He was attired in a black Prince Albert coat; a tall white collar confined his throat; his shirt-front was decorated with an enormous pink necktie. Never before had he been thus arrayed. He stepped to the edge of the platform and surveyed the crowd in silence, pulled a plug of tobacco from his hip pocket and deliberately bit off a large chew, which he rolled about in his mouth with evident relish. Two-thirds of his audience promptly did the same thing. For three minutes there was not a sound save the rustling of two hundred jaws in unison. Then Jim spoke.

"Boys," said he, and his heavy voice rumbled in dull growlings over their heads, "boys, I'm no speaker—you all know that. But I'm a-goin' to tell you somethin' you do know, an' somethin' you don't know."

A wild yell from Whispering Johnson interrupted him. Waving a huge hand in the direction of the admirer, he began again.

"Boys, I come to this yere camp w'en the only thing yere was Mizzoory John's outfit, con-sist-in' of a rocker, a slab of sow-belly, an' a quart o' whiskey. Me an' Mizzoory jest potted along till we hit big pay dirt an' the rush begun. Me an' Mizzoory an' some more of the old timers made this town. I built the first house an' run the first bar, an' Whisperin' Johnson druv the first mule team into yere. An' after we builds this yere town, in comes this yere Curtis an' them two sky pilots an' a derned Salvation Army. An' yere they air. They say they want law an' order. What the devil hev we got now? Ain't we got law an' order? You kin jest gamble we has. Didn't we hang that man from Maricopa—I misremember his name——"

"Hopkins," from one in the crowd.

"Yes. Jest so. This yere Hopkins. Didn't we hang him up for a-shootin' of Father McGrath? An' w'en he was proper dead, didn't we bury him decent? An' w'en Baldy Dunn killed that there Chinyman, didn't we call him down proper? He was a-wobblin' from that there cottonwood-tree inside o' thirty minutes. Ain't we law-abidin' an' peaceable? An' then these yere gospel sharks says we shan't drink whiskey. What's whiskey good fer if you don't drink it?"

He paused for breath, and his hands strayed up to his neck. A moment of fumbling, then a jerk, and the gorgeous pink creation lay in the dust. A quick toss of the head, accompanied by a tearing sound, and the tall white collar joined the tie. A wriggle of the big shoulders, a muttered "Dern the thing!" and the Prince Albert flopped onto a barrel.

"There," said the orator as he again faced the crowd, "that's more like it. About this whiskey-drinkin', now. This yere town wouldn't ha' been built if it hadn't been for that whiskey Mizzoory hed in his outfit. We'd ha' starved to death w'en them cayotes stole our grub if it hadn't 'a' been for that there old forty-rod. 'You mus'n't swear,' says Curtis. You couldn't ha' built this yere town without it. Could Whisp'rin' Johnson hev got them mules of his'n over that there divide without a-cussin' of 'em? I hev noticed that the man who cusses his mules most frequent makes the best time between yere and Phœnix.

"But that ain't all. This yere little man Curtis is a-goin' to change the name of this camp. Cayote ain't stylish enough for him. He wants to call it Athena. That's a nice name for a town, that is. A-the-na! An' he wants to make this town into a measly Pilot Rock. He says the Rock is a nice 'moral' town. But we don't want to be no Pilot Rock. It ain't no manner of use. They never was but one white man in that rat-hole, an' Mizzoory got him eight years ago. You-all don't like the Rock, an' if a Rocker was to come yere to-day he'd shore get hurted—bad. An' in spite of this yere objection which we properly has to that there hole in the ground, this yere little man Curtis," reach-

ing out powerful arms which clutched the terrified mayor by the collar and lifted him from the floor, "this yere mizzable little cuss used to live there. He's a Rocker, an' the worst of the breed!"

The half-strangled Curtis was flung to the floor and lay gasping for breath. His opponent pointed at him contemptuously.

"Elect such a thing as that mayor of Cayote?" roared the heavy voice. "Why—why—well, I'll be damned if you do!"

Whispering Johnson uplifted his voice in one prolonged howl, and the crowd whooped deliriously behind him. Then they adjourned. At the election next day Curtis received thirty-seven votes.

Theodore Gallagher.

PEOPLE-IN-LAW.

PEOPLE-IN-LAW are necessary evils. If people will marry, they must submit to the infliction of a number of new relations. Sometimes this infliction is bitter, sometimes sweet, and sometimes it has very little taste, but generally it has a taste.

When a man and a woman join hands at the altar, they contract an alliance not only with each other, but, in an indirect way perhaps, with their respective families. Many do not attach much importance to this fact, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that no amount of sophistry can explain away.

A young woman has promised to marry the man who appears to her possessed of all the attributes that make up a manly man.

She has long ago made up her mind, however, that John's sisters are "loud" and his mother "impossible;" she wonders how such people can have a son and brother like "dear John," and after marriage she intends keeping them at a distance.

The wedding day arrives, and she hears John's mother call her "daughter," but to her ears it does not imply much; it is only one of the forms to be gone through on that happy day.

Then comes the honeymoon time, and for two whole weeks the bride has John all to herself. No thoughts of his relations obtrude themselves on that blissful time.

When the couple return to town, to take up their abode in the cozy home that "dear John" has prepared, Mrs. John finds herself greeted by her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, as well as by her own mother and quiet school-girl sister. The two latter, however, are quite overshadowed by John's relations, and Mrs. John resents the fact in her heart.

As the days go by, she discovers that her people-in-law show no disposition to relinquish entirely John's society because he has married a wife. He is still the son and brother, although he has become a husband, and the first frown that she remembers to have seen on his brow is caused by a petulant remark of hers that she wishes his sister Flora would stop somewhere else than with them while her own home is shut up during the temporary absence of the rest of the family.

Mrs. J. sees the frown; a cold shiver runs down her back to think of the possibility of a "dispute with John," and as gracefully as she can she changes the conversation.

But how about John? He suddenly remembers little speeches uttered by his bride, which had no significance for him at the time. Their meaning comes home to him now, and he recognizes the existence of two parties in his domestic commonwealth,—his wife on the one side, and his mother and sisters on the other.

He thinks of his youth and early manhood, and of how innocently proud they had been of him and of his first successes. He remembers that long spell of fever he had, and how tenderly his mother nursed him through it all, and how his gay sister Flora gave up a visit she had long set her heart on, in order to help take care of him. Must he give up his mother and sisters now that he is married?

All day long these thoughts are in his mind, while his poor wife at home is conscious that there is a cloud on the horizon of that married life that was to have been so happy.

If Mrs. John be a sensible woman, she will recognize that her attitude towards her husband's family is a mistaken one, and resolve to make the best of them,—find out their good points, and overlook what she thinks disagreeable in them, remembering that she herself is probably not perfect in their eyes.

Should Mrs. John not be a sensible woman, she will cry her eyes out, and think John is very unreasonable to expect her to like his relations, when she "really cannot" do so.

Poor John will spend much time in keeping matters smooth between the two households, and some day when one of his friends tells him he intends getting married, John will say,—

"Look here, old fellow, I have the best wife in the world, but I don't know that I would get married if I were single again."

I do not think this picture is exaggerated. Such cases will occur so long as men and women enter into ill-considered marriages,—marriages where neither of the contracting parties spends a thought on the subject of the new relations they acquire upon their wedding day.

Is it not reasonable to suppose that those contemplating marriage should be at some little pains to ascertain whether the connections thereby to be formed will or will not be the thorns surrounding the rose of married happiness? If the dear one's good qualities overbalance the imperfections of his or her friends, it is well to remember that thorns will not prick if handled with skill.

Alan Cameron.

TO AN OLD TREE.

RETURNING spring perpetuates thy youth,
As time renews the vigorous sap of truth.

Grace F. Pennypacker.

BLUNDERS IN BIRD-NESTING.

THIS is an ill-chosen title, perhaps, yet it is purposely selected because it affords an opportunity to express an opinion on the subject of man's attitude towards bird-life. Bird-nesting in the sense of destroying or disturbing a bird's nest is a crime, and the blunder is on the part of the criminal, who degrades himself. Science, under whose name so much cruelty takes shelter, is no adequate shield to the wretch who deliberately destroys a nest. The maturing of a brood concerns the community, but the color of the eggs and structure of the nest are not matters of transcendent importance, and can be determined without interfering with the rights of the birds.

But the blunders I have in mind, if such they are, are those of the birds themselves; errors of judgment, as seen from our stand-point. As an instance, there are at this time three nests of song-sparrows on the ground in my lane, which runs in a nearly north-and-south direction. These nests are on the west side, and are tilted so as to get the full benefit of the sun in the forenoon. Each nest is deftly concealed by the dead grass of the past summer being drawn over it, and to two of the three are short roofed runways, better built than many I have seen made by a meadow-lark. So far, the birds have been wise, but in all three cases the nests have been placed dangerously near the wagon-track,—in one case within fifteen inches of a deep rut, and the others much less than twice that distance away. The result is, the bird is forced, or so it supposes, to leave the nest every time a carriage passes, and this is quite frequently during the day. Likewise, the sitting bird hurries away on the approach of every foot-passenger. These annoyances and real sources of danger were doubtless not considered when the sites were chosen, and perhaps were unheeded during nest-construction, but the facts must have dawned upon the builders before the eggs were laid. Why, then, they took the apparent risk is incomprehensible to us. From a man's point of view, these birds blundered. In their six little heads was not enough wit to foresee in time inevitable consequences. For many days I have been trying to see what were the compensating advantages of these three similar nest-sites, and I have not been able to solve the problem. However, the three broods were reared successfully, and perhaps this will be held as an evidence that it was I and not the birds that blundered.

But birds not only do blunder occasionally, but acknowledge the fact. I have been daily going the rounds of many nests in all sorts of places, and spent many an hour patiently watching the building of the nest. The Baltimore oriole has more than once commenced a nest on a still day, but found that the wind preceding a summer shower caused too much motion, and the unfinished structure was abandoned. One pair of robins fixed upon a cozy hollow in an apple-tree, but, having no roof overhead, they found their nest in a pool of water after a night's rain. Nevertheless, all else being favorable, birds are willing

to risk possible discovery rather than relinquish a position that pleases them. An uncle of mine told me that he took an old crook-neck gourd in which wrens had a nest, gradually moved it nearer and nearer the kitchen door, and finally hung it to one of the bare rafters overhead. The wrens protested, of course, and yet were not willing to be beaten if they could help it. They raised the first brood of that summer in the kitchen, but found a new nesting-place for their second brood. The following summer, so Uncle Timothy said, the wrens came back and inspected the gourd in the kitchen, but concluded to take no risks. As my uncle was a geologist, of course the story may be slightly colored, but I have confirmation of the essential facts.

But, as birds have other enemies than man, it is surprising how much they leave to chance, running risks which, from our point of view, might easily be avoided. For several days I watched a pair of robins that chose as a nesting-site the swaying twigs of a tall pine-tree. Day after day I watched and wondered, and with every puff of wind expected to see the nest come tumbling to the ground. But all went well in those airy regions, and never were two robins happier, if we can judge by their actions. When the nest was finished and probably an egg or two laid, the end came. I happened to be out of doors in the night, and, while looking at the tree-tops darkly limned against the moonlit sky, saw an owl floating in mid-air like a black cloud. Suddenly it swooped down. The robins screamed, and then there was death-like silence. One of the birds was seized, the other was frightened from its home, and the deserted nest remains a monument to their folly. What advantage there could be in a nest in such a position is not demonstrable. True, we do not see the world with a bird's eyes, but we are supposed to have a keener mental if not physical vision, and we must think that the birds blundered. They of course had a purpose in building where they did, but lacked foresight to the extent of not realizing possible disadvantages. Do such birds, escaping death, profit by experience, or repeat their folly? Probably, with them, thought-transference does not go far enough to permit the giving of advice, and improvement can lie only in the one direction of experience. I think there is satisfactory evidence of this, but it is of such a character as not to be convincing when put upon the printed page. A good deal of our ornithological knowledge must be the result of personal observation, and, while this is ever food for thought and a delightful subject of contemplation when we happen to be alone, its bloom is rubbed off, its significance is lessened, its value is depreciated, when subjected to the criticism of others who have not seen as you have seen, or, as so often happens, have not seen at all.

Charles C. Abbott.

COWARDICE.

HOW often fleeing cowards lose their breath,
And they do outrun Life who run from Death!
Lee Fairchild.

THE LITERATURE OF JAPAN.

THERE seem to be three ideas which pervade all general works on Japan,—apology for the past, wonder at the present, and a glorious prediction for the future. To the Western world Japan's past is but little known, her present is reflected in the newspapers and periodicals of the day, her future may in part be read between the lines of the present.

Volumes have been written about Japan, yet so far no comprehensive history of the people, their literature and arts, has appeared in the English language. Japan is a most interesting and valuable field for some Grote or Motley of the day.

The difficulty of translation from Japanese is great. In the first place, the language is an agglutinative one, and consequently hard for a Westerner to acquire. The poetry is one of form, and does not possess, except in the drama, remarkably deep thought or feeling. There are, besides, many plays upon words which cannot be transferred into a foreign tongue. The best prose tales and chronicles, which belong to the oldest or classical literature, are written in a dialect differing as widely from the Japanese now spoken as the language of Homer differs from the Romaic of to-day.

It is not making too bold an assertion, therefore, to say that the available translations fall far short of the merits of the originals; so much so that the Western reader is apt to underestimate the true value of this literature.

The literary expression of the Japanese may be divided as follows: the classical literature, from the composition of the earliest odes to the opening up of Japan by the Americans in 1853, and the literature from that time to the present. The classical literature is original and characteristic of the Japanese; the modern consists principally of adaptations and translations of foreign works.

The Japanese are almost universally condemned by writers for the imitation practised by them of late years of Western literature, art, science, and invention,—in fact, of Western civilization. And yet this imitation seems natural and right. Imagine, if possible, the nation of Japan leaping across the civilization of hundreds of years in half a century. Think of her emerging from the darkness of the Middle Ages and standing suddenly forth in the light of the nineteenth century. Surely it would have been worse than madness for her to have said, "This new civilization is better than ours, yet we will not imitate it. We will retain our originality, and perhaps in ages to come we shall reach the enlightened state now enjoyed by the rest of the world."

But fortunately the Japanese did not say this, but gave themselves up to the acquisition of the wonderful stores of knowledge opened to them.

It is a fact worthy of note that the beginning of almost all litera-

ture has been poetry. Prose comes much later. Japanese literature is a partial exception. The earliest written works consist of prose stories, each accompanied by a short poem. I say short, for brevity in Japanese literary composition is considered of the highest importance. Much of the poetry consists of single stanzas of but thirty-one syllables. These prose stories were written, in most cases, by the author of the poem accompanying them. As time went on, the prose story increased in size and importance, and the poem decreased correspondingly. When the poem had disappeared entirely, the Japanese romance was fully developed.

The great mass of classical poetry, as has been said, lacks feeling. It is almost devoid of emotion. This is doubtless due to the personality of the poets, who were either princesses or nobles, writing to gain the favor of the court or as a pastime.

There was only one poet who came from the humble ranks of life, and he was the greatest Japan has produced. This man, Hitomaro, was but little honored during his life, but in later years his verses became so popular that he was deified by the grateful Japanese. His poetry in its translated form, although superior to the verses of his rivals, is yet too fanciful in thought and imagery to merit very high praise from the practical-minded Westerner.

All that is of merit in the classical poetry has been gathered by Japanese scholars into two large volumes, the book of a "Myriad Leaves," and "Odes Ancient and Modern." These two volumes of early poetry are the most original of all the literature: the rest bears the stamp of Chinese influence. A glance at these volumes reveals two characteristics: the almost total absence of verses on war, the subject of so many masterpieces in other literatures, and the supremacy given by the poet to love between parent and child. This last characteristic is an evidence of the Buddhist influence, which became all-powerful in the latter half of the classical period. The native religion of the Japanese, the Shintô creed, has played an unimportant part in the history of the nation. It is nothing more than a worship of ancestors, which the hallowing influence of time has deepened into a spiritual love.

The lack of a true religion is supplemented by a copious mythology and hero-worship. The influence of this on the early literature is marked, and is especially evident in the book of Tales and Lyric Drama. This Lyric Drama is perhaps the most interesting department of Japanese literature in the estimation of the Westerner. In respect to origin and development, it is almost identical with the Greek drama. There are many fine specimens of these old plays still on the stage in Japan, although to the majority of the people the dialect in which they are written is unintelligible.

The conclusions of Professor Fiske in his "Myths and Myth-Makers" are brought strongly to the mind of a reader of the old dramas. Many of the legends we have cherished as distinctly our own are discovered in these lyrics.

The best of all the dramas in portrayal of character and excellence of verse is "Nakamitsu." That the Buddhist influence was strong,

even at that early period, is made manifest by the key-note of this drama, "Loyalty of Subjects to their Prince." The play of "The Feather Robe" is remarkable for its fancifulness. Some passages are similar to Milton's "L'Allegro."

The production of these dramas, as well as most of the native poetry, ceased upon the opening of Japan to foreigners. Since then the pursuit of literature has been neglected for science and politics.

The literature of Japan was slow in its development: even up to the middle of the nineteenth century the poetry had not passed out of the lyric state. No Japanese epic has been written. The prose developed faster than the poetry, and, contrary to all precedents, romance appeared first.

During the last fifty years the Japanese have been building intellectually. They have stocked their new temples with the knowledge of the West. Within the last three years they have developed an individualism. The war with China has taught them their power. Henceforth, in the words of Virgil, "they will be able because they seem to be able." Undoubtedly a brilliant future is just unfolding to them, a future which for their literature and art will be Periclean in its splendor.

Joslyn Z. Smith.

THE BOOK-LOVES OF STATESMEN.

THE American statesman of the stage differs materially from him of actual life. The popular idea that stump-speaking, windy harangues, adroit hand-shaking and baby-kissing make up the capital of our public men is no more true than that the Honorable Bardwell Slote, as depicted in Florence's play "The Mighty Dollar," is a fair representation of the typical American Congressman. Few of our statesmen have attained prominence who have not been students, and the greatest among them have been widely read and noted for their learning. Benjamin Franklin made an international reputation as a scientist and as a man of learning, and every member of Jefferson's Cabinet was a well-educated man.

Albert Gallatin was highly educated. He was fond of science, and during his later years devoted himself especially to the study of ethnology. He wrote an essay upon the semi-civilized nations of Mexico and America, and he has been called the father of American ethnology. He was fond of Scott, and his favorite novel was "The Antiquary," which he read once a year. He believed in reading for style rather than for story, and he said that novels should be read the last chapter first, in order that the appreciation of the style should not be lost in the interest excited by the story. He was an admirer of Jeremy Bentham, and he acknowledged himself indebted to him as his master in the art of legislation. He was a thorough Latin scholar, and at one time taught French at Harvard College. He was a contributor to the magazines, and he wrote many articles upon financial subjects.

Daniel Webster was the best general scholar in college at the time

he was at Dartmouth. He was especially well up in Latin. At fifteen his reading included Addison, Pope, Watts, and "Don Quixote." He possessed wide information on a number of subjects, and had a clear and retentive memory. His quotations were chiefly drawn from Shakespeare, Milton, Homer, and the Bible.

James Madison was also a great Bible student. He remained at Princeton a year longer than necessary, for the sake of acquiring Hebrew. He studied the whole history and evidences of Christianity, and it was largely by his influence that freedom of conscience was established by law in Virginia. His health broke down at college, and it was years before he recovered it.

Thomas Jefferson laid down rules of study for Madison, Monroe, and others of his friends, and these rules, which were the same as those he adopted for himself, were as follows :

From daybreak until eight in the morning the student should confine himself to Natural Philosophy, Morals, and Religion ; reading treatises on Astronomy, Chemistry, Anatomy, Agriculture, Botany, International Law, Moral Philosophy, and Metaphysics. Religion, during these early morning hours, was to be considered under two heads, "Natural" and "Sectarian." For information concerning sectarian religion the student was advised to apply to the following sources : Bible Commentaries by Middleton in his works, and by Priestley in his "Corruptions of Christianity" and "Early Opinions of Christ," and the Sermons of Sterne, Massillon, and Bourdaloue. From eight to twelve he advised Madison to read law and condense cases, "never using two words where one will do." From twelve to one he was to read politics : the books advised were Montesquieu, Locke, Priestley, Malthus, and the Parliamentary debates. In the afternoon the student's mind was to be relieved with history ; when evening closed in, he might regale himself with literature, criticism, rhetoric, and oratory. No, not regale himself, but sit down to a hard and long evening's work, as Jefferson did himself, keeping it up sometimes till two in the morning. The student was recommended in the evening to write criticisms of the books he read, to analyze the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, to read good English orations and pleadings with the closest attention to the secrets of their excellence, to compose original essays, and to plead imaginary causes with a friend. Hamerton, in his "Intellectual Life," does not imagine a mind which could stand such a strain.

It is little wonder that Madison broke down under such cramming, and it would probably have brought Jefferson to a state of nervous prostration had it not been for his fiddle, his horses, and his farms. Jefferson became in after-life one of the most learned men of his time, and he was throughout his whole existence a student. He did not like Scott's novels nor Hume's History of England, and, it is said, he never ceased to hate Blackstone's Commentaries. One of his granddaughters says that he read Homer, Virgil, Dante, Corneille, and Cervantes as easily as he read Shakespeare and Milton. In his youth he loved poetry, but in his old age he lost his taste for this, except for Homer and the great Athenian tragedies, which he continued to the

last to enjoy. He went over the works of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides during the year of his death. He was very fond of history, and studied it in all languages, preferring the ancients. He derived greater pleasure from his knowledge of Greek and Latin than from any other branch of literature. "I have," says his granddaughter, "often heard him express his gratitude to his father for causing him to receive a classical education. I saw him more frequently with a volume of the classics in his hand than any other book. Still, he read new publications as they came out, never missed a number of the Reviews, especially of the *Edinburgh*, and kept himself acquainted with what was being done, said, or thought, in the world from which he had retired."

When Jefferson was in love he was especially fond of reading Ossian: Parton says that he spent a great part of his honeymoon in reading these poems to his wife. He became so infatuated with them that he wished to learn Gaelic in order that he might study the poems in the original. He was all his life a great book-collector, and his library, which he sold to Congress for about one-half its cost, or about twenty-three thousand dollars, was so large that it made sixteen wagon-loads of three thousand pounds each.

John Randolph of Roanoke quarrelled with his doctor on his death-bed about the pronunciation of certain words, and both his letters and his speeches are full of literary allusions. His duel with Clay arose from a comparison of Clay and Adams as a coalition corresponding to that of "Blifil" and "Black George" in Fielding's novel "Tom Jones," which Randolph referred to as a combination unheard of till then, of "The Puritan and the Blackleg." Randolph's whole life was made up of lamentations of remorse, and for him the world in every way went wrong. He lamented throughout his life his rambling way of reading, but he covered nearly every field of English literature. Before he was eleven years of age he had read Goldsmith's Roman History, "The Arabian Nights," and Voltaire's "History of Charles the Twelfth." He read "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," Plutarch, Pope's Homer, "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver," "Tom Jones," "Orlando Furioso," and Thomson's "Seasons." Shakespeare and "The Arabian Nights" were his idols. His letters abound in quotations from Shakespeare; and in these letters he often discusses the books he is reading. In a letter to Francis Scott Key, the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," he says "that no poet in our language, Shakespeare and Milton apart, has such power over my feelings as Byron, and I cannot yield his precedence to Walter Scott."

On his way to England, Randolph chatted with Jacob Harvey of New York about books. Harvey says at this time Randolph's favorite author was Milton, and that he frequently gave readings from "Paradise Lost" to the company on shipboard. He did not like Young, Thomson, Johnson, or Southey. They were, he said, too artificial. Of the poems then current he placed "Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress" first on the list for its great wit and satire, and "The Twopenny Postbag" next for similar excellencies. Third came "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," for every variety of sentiment well expressed; "but," he

concluded, "I cannot go Moore's songs; they are too sentimental by half, all ideal and above nature."

Speaking of Moore, Randolph met him in the House of Commons, and describes him as a spruce, dapper little gentleman, who, upon acquaintance, turned out to be a most fascinating and witty fellow. Said Mr. Randolph, "I told him that I envied him more for being the author of the two satirical poems above spoken of than for all the beautiful songs which play the fool with the young ladies' hearts." Randolph passionately admired Burns as well as Byron, but he said he could not pretend to decide between them in point of genius. John Randolph's religion was much affected by his feelings, and he chose those parts of literature which verge upon the erratic and insane. He was very near insanity himself during a part of his life, and at one time he wrote that he preferred "Lear" to all the rest of Shakespeare's plays, and that in "Timon of Athens" only was the bard really in earnest. He read the Bible also with care and diligence: the story of his conversion describes his struggles as to its comprehension. He could not understand the Epistles of St. Paul, but, he said, by the aid of Locke's "Paraphrase" he hoped to comprehend them.

Randolph did not like novels. He advised Harvey not to read any, concluding his lecture as follows: "When you go home, sir, tell your father that I recommend abstinence from novel-reading and whiskey punch. Depend upon it, they are both injurious to the brain."

John Quincy Adams was perhaps the hardest student among American statesmen. He began as a boy, and continued his studies throughout his long life, until he fell dead in the Capitol at Washington. He left a library of twelve thousand volumes, and a chest of valuable manuscripts, original and translated, prose and poetry.

His earliest letter in existence was written to his father while he was yet under ten years of age. In this he says,—

"Mamma has a troublesome task to keep me a-studying. I own I am ashamed of myself. I have but just entered the third volume of Rollin's History, but I designed to have got half thro' it by this time. I am determined this week to be more diligent. I have set myself a stent this week to read the third volume half out. If I can keep my resolution, I may again, at the end of the week, give a better account of myself. I wish, sir, you would give me in writing some instructions in regard to the use of my time, and advise me how to proportion my studies and play, and I will keep them by me and endeavor to follow them.

"With the present intention of growing better, I am, dear sir, your son,

"JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

"P.S.—If you will be so good as to favor me with a blank book, I will transcribe the most remarkable passages I meet with in my reading, which will serve to fix them on my mind."

These words seem rather old for a boy of ten, but he kept up the plan laid down in them throughout his life, and it was the common

saying of statesmen of his day that Adams knew everything, and that what he had not on his tongue he could find in his diary. He had a good memory : it is said that he could quote with precision from works which he had not looked over for forty years. He was familiar with Greek, Latin, French, German, and Italian. His literary loves were in history and literature, moral philosophy and law. His favorite English poet was Shakespeare, and he considered Ovid the Shakespeare of the Romans. Cicero he diligently studied and translated. But he did not much admire the poetry of Byron. Pope was one of his favorites in early life, and in later years he was very fond of Watts's psalms and hymns. It is said that he often rose from his seat as he repeated them, and that among his favorite stanzas was the following :

Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

Andrew Jackson's library, so General Brinkerhoff, who was a tutor at the Hermitage, tells me, showed that he was not a man of high literary culture. His books were chiefly the presents of friends or of publishers, and the library was a conglomeration of all kinds of literary material. Some of the books were good, and many were not worth shelf-room. They ranged from Barlow's "Columbiad" down to small editions of "The Devil on Two Sticks," and from the Penny Cyclopædia to Mrs. Gaston's Cook-Book. The books which Jackson read were mainly theological, agricultural, and historical. He was a Bible-reader during his later years, and he always had nightly worship in the White House during the time he was President.

John C. Calhoun, like Madison, broke down his health by overworking as a student. He had no opportunity of general reading until he was thirteen years of age, when he visited his brother-in-law, a Presbyterian clergyman. There was a circulating library in the house, and in fourteen weeks young Calhoun read the whole stock of historical works within it, consisting of Rollin's Ancient History, Robertson's Charles V. and America, and Voltaire's Charles the Twelfth. He did not seem to care for novels, but after finishing these he turned to Cook's Voyages. He was working away at "Locke on the Understanding," when his health gave out. His eyes became sore, he grew pale and thin, and his mother sent for him to come home and turn his attention to hunting, fishing, and other country sports. He passed four years in this way, and then went to Yale College. He was a man of wide reading, and often surprised specialists by his knowledge of their branch of the professions or sciences. A naval officer once said that he did not like him, because he never liked a man who knew more about his profession than he did. Professor Brady, the noted photographer, once told me that when he took Calhoun's daguerrotype he was surprised by his knowledge of the then comparatively unknown art of photography, and that Mr. Calhoun, in a two hours' conversation, taught him some things concerning a matter upon which he (Mr. Brady), then the recognized authority of the country, was ignorant.

Aaron Burr was one of the most accomplished men who ever appeared upon the stage of American history. He was throughout his life a student, and it is said that while he studied law he spent twenty hours out of the twenty-four at his books. He was a French scholar, and while he was courting Miss Prevost his favorite authors were Rousseau and Voltaire. He had in after-life a fine library, and he was one of the few men in America who kept an account with a bookseller at London. He bought new books as they came out, and read Gibbon, volume by volume, as it appeared. He was a great admirer of Jeremy Bentham, was fond of Scott, and, like the most cultivated public men of America of his time, was a student of the *Edinburgh Review*.

When Franklin was thirty he made it a rule to spend twelve hours a week at his books; it was at this time that he began the study of languages. He soon learned to read French, Italian, and Spanish. Italian he learned, says Barton, in company with a friend who was very fond of chess. Franklin proposed that the victor should impose the task upon the vanquished in these games, such as learning a verb or writing a translation, and that the task should be performed after the next meeting. Franklin thought that the modern languages should be acquired first and Latin and Greek later. He says he found his Latin very easy to read after his knowledge of the three modern languages. He did not approve of Latin and Greek as a principal means of education, and one of the last acts of his life was to write an able protest against the system.

President William Henry Harrison held directly opposite views as to classical study. He was a great admirer of the classics, his inaugural address being full of allusions to the Greeks and Romans. He allowed Daniel Webster to revise it. Webster, on going to a dinner the night after he had completed this work, was asked how he felt. He replied that he was terribly tired, for that he had killed that day about forty proconsuls and two or three Roman emperors, whom the President had brought to life in his inaugural.

Patrick Henry has generally been known as a fiddling, lazy, non-reading genius, and Wirt carries out this idea of him in his biography. It is a question whether this supposition is a true one. Patrick Henry's sisters say that he was a hard student, and that his father's library was large and well selected. Henry was a classical scholar. It is said that he read the Latin as easily as the English. His favorite author was Livy. His Latin Virgil was still in existence a few years ago, and its margins were filled with closely written notes.

Frank G. Carpenter.

CHARLES LAMB AND ROBERT LLOYD.

SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

I.

ROBERT LLOYD was the third of the twelve children of Charles Lloyd, the Quaker banker of Birmingham, whose country house at Bingley gave Bingley Hall its name. Robert's elder brother was that Charles Lloyd who, in part of 1796 and 1797, lived, first as pupil and then as friend, under Coleridge's roof, who almost persuaded Lamb to "turn Quaker," and whose poems were added to those of Coleridge and Lamb in the volume which Cottle published in 1797. Coleridge was then twenty-five, Lamb twenty-two, and Charles Lloyd two days Lamb's junior. The great tragedy of Lamb's life had taken place a year earlier.

The Lloyd family was an interesting one. In 1796 its head, Charles Lloyd, the banker, was a man of nearly fifty, resolute in probity, a champion of Quaker principles, a stern disciplinarian and vigilant parent, yet at the same time possessed of such lenitives as a love of agriculture, admiration of the classics, sympathy with the poor and the oppressed, and a preference, common among wealthy Quakers, for spacious ways of life. He was master of several languages, and his memory was prodigious, enabling him to repeat without hesitation the whole of the *Georgics* and *Bucolics*.

Charles Lloyd, the son, had none of his father's confidence. He was constitutionally weak, a sufferer from epileptic fits, and his mind, though singularly luminous and active, was too frequently employed in wrestling with problems beyond its capacity. He became early a prey to religious doubts and fears, seeking refuge first in Rousseau, and afterwards in Coleridge and metaphysics, and passed gradually into a state of despondency analogous to that of Cowper. He enjoyed lucid intervals, but to the end was subject to long and awful periods of depression, during which it was found necessary to place him under restraint. Coleridge probably did him no good. Their companionship, beginning in the autumn of 1796, lasted, however, only a short while. In the summer of 1797 came a break, and for some years Lloyd passed out of Coleridge's life. With Lamb he remained longer on friendly terms. In 1798 they produced together a volume entitled "Blank Verse." But a misunderstanding arose, and the two men drifted apart and apart remained.

In both cases the cause of offence was more Lloyd's misfortune than his fault. A gentler, purer-minded, more devoted creature did not exist; but he had a luckless tendency to divulge just those personal secrets which he ought most jealously to have preserved. That at one time Lamb loved him with sincerity we know from the affectionate references in Lamb's letters to Coleridge, and from the verses "To Charles Lloyd, an Unexpected Visitor," which appear in Lamb's poems. But, although Talfourd says of Lloyd that "his admirable

intellect" was capable of the "finest processes of severe reasoning," we must consider him no companion either for Lamb or Coleridge. He lacked nimbleness, flexibility, fun. And in time his extreme sensibility was doomed to grow tiresome.

Before the final separation came Lamb seems more than once to have resented Lloyd's conduct. According to Canon Ainger, in a note appended to his edition of Lamb's Letters, the stanza of "The Old Familiar Faces,"

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces,

is a reference not, as has generally been supposed, to Coleridge, but to Lloyd. Coleridge is the

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother.

The poem was written in 1798, in the same month in which Lamb wrote to Coleridge, "I had well-nigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd."

The serious rupture, however, did not come, fortunately for posterity, until after Lloyd had introduced Lamb, visiting him at Cambridge in the autumn of 1799, to Thomas Manning, then a tutor at Caius. We owe Charles Lloyd gratitude for this, for it was Manning who furnished the Chinese story upon which the "Dissertation on Roast Pig" pivots, and who inspired some of the best of the letters.

Robert Lloyd was of a mind less dogged and contemplative than that of his brother Charles. From the evidence of a number of private letters written by Robert Lloyd to his wife and members of his family, we may suppose him to have been sensitive and ardent, impatient of restrictions, intolerant of deception, frank, affectionate, and a very poor judge of character. Charles seems to have been incapable of laughter, but one can fancy Robert laughing often. When Lamb met him first, late in 1796 or early in 1797, he was eighteen (he was born in December, 1778), and apparently was visiting Charles during a holiday from Saffron Walden, in Essex, where, much against his will, he was apprenticed. Lamb was prepossessed at once. "Lamb," says Charles Lloyd in a letter to Robert, dated March 2, 1797, "desir'd to be remember'd to you whenever I wrote—he took a great liking to you." And again, writing on September 20 of the same year, "Lamb often talks of you." It must have been soon after this that the correspondence between Lamb and Robert Lloyd began.

Lamb's letters to Robert Lloyd are not his most characteristic; are not to be ranked with those to Manning, Coleridge, Wordsworth, or even Barton. It requires two to make a perfect letter—the writer and the recipient must be in partnership; and Robert Lloyd was not the best of partners. Hence there is little of Lamb, as we know him from Canon Ainger's volumes, in the early letters, yet it is interesting to see how reasonably, temperately, and wisely this young man (young, but prematurely aged) of twenty-three could advise a still younger on grave matters. The Lamb that we do there meet, although unfamiliar and lacking the sportiveness and mischief that we so prize in him, has a

rare beauty and strength. It is impossible to read this little bundle of letters without increased respect for the shining excellences of a good man and great genius. Although we feel Robert Lloyd to have been at first something of a drag upon his friend, later he developed into a worthier correspondent. It was no small thing to draw from Lamb some of the passages that follow: the praise of London, the outburst against morbid despondency, the eulogy of "The Complete Angler," the analysis of Richard III.'s character, the testimony to Jeremy Taylor's sweetness and might, all are precious additions to that fragrant and imperishable body of delicate and distinguished literature which we know as Lamb's Letters.

Robert Lloyd, though not unsettled to the same extent as his brother Charles, was yet dissatisfied both with his employment and the religion of his fathers. The prospect of crystallizing into a business man seems to have had very little attraction for him. He chafed continually, as we gather from the rebukes called forth from Lamb. This, given in its completeness, is the first letter of the series; the date is missing, but we cannot be far wrong in fixing it somewhere early in 1798,—as nearly as possible one hundred years ago:

MY DEAR ROBERT,—I am a good deal occupied with a calamity near home, but not so much as to prevent my thinking about you with the warmest affection—you are among my very dearest friends. I know you will feel deeply when you hear that my poor sister is unwell again—one of her old disorders—but I trust it will hold no longer than her former illnesses have done. Do not imagine, Robert, that I sink under this misfortune; I have been season'd to such events, and think I could bear anything tolerably well. My own health is left me, and my good spirits, and I have some duties to perform. These duties shall be *my object*. I wish, Robert, *you* could find an object. I know the painfulness of vacuity, all its achings and inexplicable longings. I wish to God I could recommend any plan to you—stock your mind well with religious knowledge; discipline it to wait with patience for duties that may be your lot in life; prepare yourself not to expect too much out of yourself; *read and think*—this is all commonplace advice, I know: I know, too, that it is easy to give advice, which in like circumstances we might not follow ourselves. You must depend upon yourself—there will come a time when you will wonder you were not more content. I know you will excuse my saying any more. Be assured of my warmest affection.

C. LAMB.

In the next letter Lamb is still the kindly mentor. Apparently Robert Lloyd had been moved to one of those excesses of admiration of a fellow-man to which youth is subject. Lamb's reply is interesting, both for its solid sense and its personal revelation. This is one passage:

Our duties are to do good expecting nothing again, to bear with contrary dispositions, to be candid and forgiving, not to crave and long after a communication of sentiment and feeling, but rather to avoid dwelling upon these feelings, however good, because they are our own. A man may be intemperate and selfish, who indulges in *good feelings* for the mere pleasure they give him. I do not wish to deter you from making a friend, a true friend, and such a friendship where the parties are not blind to each other's faults is very useful and valuable. I perceive a tendency in you to this error, Robert. I know you have chosen to take up an high opinion of my moral worth, but I say before God, and I do not lie, you are mistaken in me. I could not bear to lay open all my failings to you, for the sentiment of shame would be too pungent. Let this be as an example to you.

In the next letter we have a piece of special pleading of grave and touching beauty. Robert Lloyd, like many young Quakers, was impatient of the quietude and inaction of his ancestral creed. This is not the place for an inquiry into that creed; it is here enough to say that the professions of the Society of Friends are less compatible with youth than with age. Quakerism is venerable, and in many aspects lovely, but youth is the negation of very much that George Fox taught. Robert Lloyd seems to have rebelled against the Quaker strictness of attire. A letter from his mother, dated August, 1798, has this passage: "Permit me to drop one hint more and then I hope this sermon will be ended. I was griev'd to hear of thy appearing in those *fantastical* trousers in London. I am clear such eccentricities of dress would only make thee laughed at by the World, whilst thy sincere Friends would be *deeply hurt*. Canst thou love thy father and yet do things that sink him as well as thyself in the opinion of our best Friends? Thou art my dear son form'd to make an amiable figure in society, but for once trust to the judgment of thy Mother, neither thy Person or mind are form'd for eccentricities of dress or conduct." And a little later Robert's father was moved to write, "Thou wilt please me by observing simplicity in thy dress and manners. Do not let the customs of the World influence thee." But the boy's especial dislike seems to have been the silent meetings, gray and uneventful, with no ritual for the organization of wandering thoughts, no music to allure the soul from mundane trappings. Lamb reasoned with him patiently and lovingly:

I am sadly sorry that you are relapsing into your old complaining strain. I wish I could adapt my consolations to your disease, but, alas! I have none to offer which your own mind and the suggestions of books cannot better supply. Are you the first whose situation hath not been exactly squar'd to his ideas? or rather, will you find me that man who does not complain of the one thing wanting? That thing obtained, another wish will start up. While this eternal craving of the mind keeps up its eternal hunger, no feast that my palate knows of will satisfy that hunger, till we come to drink the new wine (whatever it be) in the kingdom of the Father. See what trifles disquiet us. You are unhappy because your parents expect you to attend meetings. I don't know much of Quakers' meetings, but I believe I may moderately reckon them to take up the space of six hours in the week. Six hours to please your parents; and that time not absolutely lost. Your mind remains, you may think and plan, remember and foresee, and do all human acts of mind sitting as well as walking; you are quiet at meeting—one likes to be sometimes; you may advantageously crowd your day's devotions into that space—nothing you see or hear then can be unfavourable to it; you are for that time at least exempt from the counting-house, and your parents cannot chide you there. Surely, at so small expense you cannot grudge to observe the fifth Commandment. I decidedly consider your refusal as a breach of that God-descended precept—Honour and observe thy parents in all lawful things. Silent worship cannot be *unlawful*: there is no idolatry, no invocation of saints, no bowing before the consecrated wafer in all this, nothing which a wise man would refuse, or a good man fear to do. What is it? Sitting a few hours in a week with certain good people, who call *that* worship. You subscribe to no articles. If your mind wanders, it is no crime in you, who do not give credit to these infusions of the spirit. They sit in a temple, you sit as in a room adjoining—only do not disturb their pious work with gabbling, nor your own necessary peace with heart-burnings at your not ill-meaning parents, nor a silly contempt of the work which is going on before you. I know that if my parents were to live again, I would do more things to please them than merely sitting still six hours in a week. Perhaps I enlarge too much on this affair, but indeed

your objection seems to me ridiculous, and involving in it a principle of frivolous and vexatious resistance.

You have often borne with my freedoms; bear with me once more in this. If I did not love you, I should not trouble myself whether you went to meeting or not—whether you conform'd or not the will of your father.

And so from the less familiar Lamb we part. Henceforward the letters are more in a vein with which it is our delight already to be acquainted.

Here, for instance, in the first of them to bear a date—November 13, 1798—is a spirited pæan of the joy of living, such as no pen but Lamb's could have composed:

One passage in your letter a little displeas'd me. The rest was nothing but kindness, which Robert's letters are ever brimful of. You say that "this world to you seems drain'd of all its sweets!" At first I had hoped you only meant to intimate the high price of sugar! but I am afraid you meant more. O, Robert, I don't know what you call sweet. Honey and the honeycomb, roses and violets are yet in the earth. The sun and moon yet reign in Heaven, and the lesser lights keep up their pretty twinklings. Meats and drinks, sweet sights and sweet smells, a country walk, spring and autumn, follies and repentance, quarrels and reconcilements have all a sweetness by turns. Good-humour and good-nature, friends at home that love you, and friends abroad that miss you—you possess all these things, and more innumerable, and these are all sweet things. You may extract honey from everything; but do not go a-gathering after gall. The bees are wiser in their generation than the race of sonnet writers and complainers, Bowless and Charlotte Smiths, and all that tribe, who can see no joys but what are passed and fill people's heads with notions of the unsatisfying nature of earthly comforts. I assure you I find this world a very pretty place.

A week later Lamb sent his young friend some extracts from his play "John Woodvil." Two months afterwards a startling event happened. Robert ran away—we cannot be quite sure whether from Saffron Walden or Birmingham, from master or parent, but certainly from Quaker restraint—and appeared suddenly at Lamb's. On January 21, 1799, Lamb wrote to Southey the letter printed in Canon Ainger's edition (vol. i. p. 100): "I am requested by [Charles] Lloyd to excuse his not replying to a kind letter received from you. He is at present situated in most distressful family perplexities, which I am not at liberty to explain, but they are such as to demand all the strength of his mind, and quite exclude any attention to foreign objects. His brother Robert (the flower of his family) hath eloped from the persecutions of his father, and has taken shelter with me. What the issue of his adventure will be, I know not. He hath the sweetness of an angel in his heart, combined with admirable firmness of purpose; an uncultivated, but very original, and I think superior, genius." What happened after this step, or how Lamb extricated himself from such an embarrassing position, is not known. Robert seems to have taken a holiday, for in a letter from Lamb in the spring of 1799 reference is made to his return from a visit to Worcester. Lamb next turns to the case of a mutual acquaintance of Robert and himself, then staying in London as his guest. Thus:

He is perpetually getting into mental vagaries. He is in Love! and tosses and tumbles about in his bed like a man in a barrel of spikes. He is more sociable; but I am heartily sick of his domesticating with me; he

wants so many sympathies of mine, and I want his, that we are daily declining into *civility*. I shall be truly glad when he is gone. I find 'tis a dangerous experiment to grow too familiar. Some natures cannot bear it without converting into indifference. I know but one being that I could ever consent to live perpetually with, and that is Robert. But Robert must go whither prudence and paternal regulations indicate a way. I shall not soon forget you—do not fear that—nor grow cool towards Robert. My not writing is no proof of these disloyalties. Perhaps I am unwell, or vexed, or spleen'd, or something, when I should otherwise write.

The allusion to prudence and paternal relations is probably a glance at the flight from Saffron Walden. The letter continues with the following dissertation on taste, which is no less pertinent to-day than it was then :

Assure Charles of my unalterable affection, and present my warmest wishes for his and Sophia's happiness. . . . I am much pleased with his poems in the "Anthology"—one in particular. The other is a kind and no doubt just tribute to Robert and Olivia, but I incline to opinion that these domestic addresses should not always be made public. I have, I know, more than once exposed my own secretest feelings of that nature, but I am sorry that I did. Nine out of ten readers laugh at them. When a man dies leaving the name of a great author behind him, any unpublished relics which let one into his domestic retirements are greedily gathered up, which in his lifetime, and before his fame had ripened, would by many be considered as impertinent. But if Robert and his sister were gratified with seeing their brother's heart in print, let the rest of the world go hang. They may prefer the remaining trumpery of the "Anthology." All I mean to say is, I think I perceive an indelicacy in thus exposing one's virtuous feelings to criticism. But of delicacy Charles is at least as true a judge as myself.

The Anthology was the "Annual Anthology" for 1799, edited by Southey. Charles Lloyd was, to be precise, represented in it by more than two poems. He had four: the "Lines to a Brother and Sister," some blank verse "To a Young Man who considered the Perfection of Human Nature as consisting in the Vigour and Indulgence of the more Boisterous Passions," and sonnets to a Woodpecker and the Sabbath.

After leaving Worcester Robert seems to have continued to travel, for in a letter from his sister Priscilla (afterwards the wife of Christopher Wordsworth) in June of the same year—1799—he is addressed at Bath. His sister enters with gentle reasonableness into his difficulties, sympathizing with his objection to business and suggesting possible solutions. Apparently he had some thoughts of living with Lamb, for Priscilla says, "Lamb would not, I think, by any means be a person to take up your abode with. He is too much like yourself—he would encourage those feelings which it certainly is your duty to suppress."

Lamb's next letter to Robert offers a pleasant glimpse of the elder Lloyd. The date is December, 1799. It begins,—

DEAR ROB.,—Thy presents will be most acceptable, whenever they come, both for thy sake and for the liquor, which is a beverage I most admire. Wine makes me hot, and brandy makes me drunk, but porter warms without intoxication, and elevates, yet not too much above the point of tranquillity. But I hope Robert will come himself before the tap is out. He may be assured that his good honest company is the most valuable present, after all, he can make us.

These cold nights crave something beside porter—good English mirth and heart's ease. Rob. must contrive to pass some of his Christmas with us, or at least drink in the century with a welcome.

The letter continues :

I have not seen your father or Priscilla since [the visit to town]. Your father was in one of his best humours—(I have seldom seen him in one not good)—and after dinner, while we were sitting comfortably before the parlour fire, after our wine, he beckoned me suddenly out of the room. I, expecting some secrets, followed him, but it was only to go and sit with him in the old forsaken counting house, which he declared to be the pleasantest spot in the house to him, and told me how much business used to be done there in former days. Your father whimsically mixes the good man and the man of business in his manners, but he is not less a good man for being a man of business. He has conceived great hopes of thy one day uniting both characters, and I joyfully expect the same.

The letter concludes with this postscript :

Mary joins me in remembrances to Robert, and in expectation of the coming beverage.

Do you think you shall be able to come?

Monday night, just porter time.

Robert Lloyd also appears to have met Manning about this time, for the next two letters in our bundle are in Manning's hand. In the appreciative tone of these missives we have another proof that Robert Lloyd must have been a very engaging fellow. This is an extract from Manning's first note, written probably early in 1800 :

I was, indeed, very happy at Lamb's. I abode there but three days. He is very good—I wish you and he and myself were now sitting over a bowl of punch, or a tankard of porter. We often talked of you, and were perfectly agreed—but I won't tell you what we agreed to about you, lest you should hold up your head too high. You'll be sufficiently vain, I doubt not, Master Robert, at having been made the subject of conversation between such great men as *Lamb* and I (are likely to be). I was introduced to Coleridge, which was a great gratification to me. I think him a man of very splendid abilities and animated feelings. But let me whisper a word in your ear, Robert—twenty Coleridges could not supply your loss to me, if you were to forsake me. So if any *friendly interposer* should come and tell you I am not what I seem, and warn you against my friendship, beware of listening to him.

Here, for the sake of chronological order and for its bearing upon the Lloyd family, a passage from one of Lamb's letters to Manning at Cambridge (Canon Ainger's edition, vol. i. p. 116) may be inserted. The date is March 17, 1800. "Tell Charles [Lloyd] I have seen his mamma and have almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete matron-lady-quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was; but I have not time to fall in love." (Olivia was another of Robert's sisters.) Manning's second letter to Robert—July 15, 1800—contains this passage :

I often picture to myself a contingency, which most likely never will take place, but yet may, and which I contemplate with a strange fondness and de-

light: 'tis of you and myself travelling together abroad, in the South of France, or in Italy, or in Switzerland, or in some part of Spain. Your susceptibility and my mathematical caution would form an excellent travelling temperament, I think. If there was peace over Europe, and you and I had each of us independent fortunes, I am sure I should propose it to you. I should like to know whether this idea pleases you as it does me, but I should guess not, for which I could give most sage reasons; and if I guessed wrong, I could give you most sage reasons again to account for the erroneousness of my former reasons—in short, *if I should guess*, it would be guessing.

The projected tour was never accomplished; and with this letter Manning passes from the correspondence.

In the same month of 1800 a letter of Lamb's offers this characteristic confession:

I have had such a deadness about me. Man delights not me, nor woman neither. I impute it in part or altogether to the stupefying effect which continued fine weather has upon me. I want some rains or even snow and intense cold winter nights to bind me to my habitation, and make me value it as a home—a sacred character which it has not attained with me hitherto. I cannot read or write when the sun shines. I can only walk.

Lamb goes on to say that he has been staying with his friend Gutch at Oxford:

Gutch's family is a very fine one, consisting of well-grown sons and daughters, and all likely and well favoured. What is called a Happy Family—that is, according to my interpretation, a numerous assemblage of young men and women, all fond of each other to a certain degree, and all happy together, but where the very number forbids any two of them to get close enough to each other to share secrets and *be friends*. That close intercourse can only exist (commonly, I think), in a family of two or three. I do not envy large families. The fraternal affection by diffusion and multi-participation is ordinarily thin and weak. They don't get near enough to each other.

In the autumn of the same year, 1800, a letter of Lamb to Manning, dated October 5 (Canon Ainger's edition, vol. i. p. 140), gives the following piece of news: "Robert Lloyd is come to town. Priscilla meditates going to see 'Pizarro' at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's), under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu tempora! heu mores!* I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute." A letter of Robert's to his father, written during this visit, contains, it is amusing to note, no mention of the theatre. Thus: "My dear Parents,—Priscilla wrote you word of my arrival here. I am well, and so is my sister. At present I have been in Tower Street, with a few digressions to my friend Lamb."

E. V. Lucas.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH.



The Peacemakers.
By John Strange
Winter.

The good-natured satire of this latest novel from the un-failing and always brilliant pen of John Strange Winter is unequalled by any story we have read, saving perhaps her own *Truth-Tellers*, which it both resembles and surpasses in plot and in treatment. In the *Truth-Tellers* we were convulsed by the unrelenting candor of some orphans from the North who crept under the wings of a maiden connection in London. In *The Peacemakers* the fun is also tipped with the shrewd sting of satire; but in place of the blundering honesty of the infants we have a religious sect founded on Peace, yet falling into family feuds more distressing and violent than those of the most pugnacious church militant.

When Florence Milvane, the typewriter, marries Matthew Gorman and suddenly finds herself translated into the home of the Peacemakers, she is at once astonished and attracted. "Peace be on you" is the greeting she receives from master and servant alike, and she finds the sect principally composed of the family of her father-in-law, who has organized it as a balm to his bleeding heart, long ago denied the woman it yearned for. Through many diverting side issues the story runs on till it reaches the crisis, which turns one daughter from Mr. Gorman's home because she refuses to marry a cad he has chosen for her, inflicts a sore mental wound upon his long-suffering wife, and estranges his dutiful son. The home of peace becomes the seat of war, and, although all ends tranquilly, the situation is inimitable, and the book leaves a deeper impression than is usual with one which offers such unalloyed amusement. Mrs. Stannard has outdone herself in *The Peacemakers*, and the Lippincotts have done wisely to add it to their list.



The Vicar. By
Joseph Hatton.


Charming as a drama is charming, with scenery, situation, character, and climax, is *The Vicar*, by Joseph Hatton, one of the latest issues from the Lippincotts' press.

We are always assured a strong and alluring story by this novelist, and in *The Banishment of Jessop Blythe* he surpassed himself in rugged power; but *The Vicar* is a sort of pastoral, with dramatic touches to intensify it, and it carries an intimate human quality absent in the more tragic story of Jessop Blythe.

In brief, the plot turns on the love of Susannah Woodcote for Tom, the vicar's scapegrace son. Tom was bad from the beginning. He ruined poor

Lizzie Melford, and was driven to take refuge in America, where his company was of the roughest elements. He secretly went home and robbed his own father's safe. This act was detected by Susannah and held as a distressing secret for years. But Tom came to his deserts at last, and so did Susannah, and all ends as the reader would wish it.


The tale is genuinely diverting, and realizes every requirement of fiction in being so.



A Manual of Dissection and Histology. By G. H. French, A.M.

Students who contemplate a course in biology should by all means examine this excellent *Manual of Dissection and Histology* (Lippincott) by G. H. French, A.M., Professor of Physiology and Biology and Curator in the Southern Illinois Normal University, and member of numerous

scientific bodies on both sides of the sea. Professor French has had wide practice as an instructor, and it is his mature opinion that text-books dealing with the laboratory are inadequate and scarce. He has therefore followed the custom sanctioned by many learned scholars, of preparing a manual for his classes which shall at the same time impart to all students his store of experience. This compact little volume is the result; and within its covers it gives an elementary course, with full details for manipulation, and an outline of theory and practice. Pupils are taught the technical methods of preparing specimens for microscopical examination and for preservation, and are put through a sufficient catechism to enable them to enter the higher branches of the study of biology. The pages are supplied with some necessary cuts, and, all in all, the book is a distinct fulfilment of its author's useful aims.



MERE FOLLY.

BY

MARIA LOUISE POOL,

AUTHOR OF "DALLY," "KATHARINE NORTH," "TENTING AT STONY BEACH," ETC.

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.

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